

Families of Palestinian forces enter Gaza

RAFAH, Egypt (AFP) — Nearly 80 families of Palestinian policemen awaiting deployment in the Gaza Strip crossed into the Israeli-occupied territory from Egypt on Saturday. "The arrival of these families comes ahead of the deployment of the Palestinian police force planned for Dec. 13," Colonel Ibrahim Yousef, a Gaza police force official said. These were families of policemen who underwent training in Egypt. Most of them had been living in Tunisia and other North African countries, Mr. Yousef said. Some 6,000 Palestinian policemen are to take over security in Jericho and Gaza in the first phase of autonomy. A force of 1,500 policemen is to be sent from Cairo as soon as Israel withdraws its troops, a Palestinian source said. Last month PLO Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat ordered Palestine Liberation Army troops based in Algeria, Libya, Sudan, Yemen and Iraq to travel to Egypt and Jordan to undergo police training for the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho. When other parts of the West Bank are granted autonomy in a later phase, up to 15,000 Palestinian police may be deployed.

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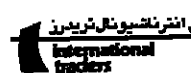
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Majali meets Lebanese minister

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Saturday received Lebanese Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Anwar Khalil and reviewed with him latest developments of the Arab-Israeli peace process. The prime minister underlined the importance of commercial exchange between the two countries and the need for investment incentives in all sectors. Attending the meeting were Minister of State for Legal Affairs Khaled Zou'bi and Minister of Trade and Industry Rima Khalaf.

Senior Qatari officer visits Baghdad

NICOSIA (AP) — A senior military officer from Qatar met with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on Saturday, the Iraqi News Agency reported. He was the highest ranking official from the Gulf Arab countries to visit Baghdad since the 1991 Gulf war. The Iraqi agency, monitored in Cyprus, gave no details of the meeting in Baghdad between President Saddam and the Qatari assistant chief of staff, Sheikh Mohammad Ben Fahd Ben Mohammad Al Thani. Qatar angered its allies in the Gulf Cooperation Council when it sent its ambassador, Mohammad Ben Rashid Al Khalifa, back to Baghdad in October 1992. "The ambassador told Iraqi newspapers at the time that President Saddam 'has a sincere desire to restore Arab relations as they were before' the Gulf crisis."

Iran: Dispute over islands is 'solvable'

NICOSIA (AP) — A senior Iranian official said Saturday a dispute with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) over three strategic Gulf islands is "minor and solvable," the Islamic Republic News Agency reported. The official, Interior Minister Ali Mohammad Besharati, said "dialogue is the best way of patching up differences between countries," the agency said. His comments came during a meeting with the UAE ambassador in Tehran, Mohammad Burheimah. The agency provided only partial quotations of his remarks.

Austrian police foil letter bomb bid

VIENNA (R) — Police Saturday foiled a letter bomb attack against the president of the Austrian Caritas Roman Catholic humanitarian and charity organization, a police spokesman said. Saturday's letter bomb was the third in two days. Two letter bombs exploded on Friday injuring a Roman Catholic priest and a television presenter who are both active in helping refugees and foreigners in Austria.

Court rejects plea by Bhutto's brother

KARACHI (R) — A Pakistani special court rejected Saturday a plea by Mir Murtaza Bhutto, jailed brother of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, that charges against him of hijacking and leading a "terrorist" group be dismissed. The judge at the special court for speedy trial said there were sufficient grounds to establish his involvement in the two cases and rejected his application. The judge was forced to adjourn the hearing after more than 200 supporters stormed through police barricades and burst into the courtroom, shouting: "Long live Bhutto," "free Bhutto." Mr. Bhutto, 39, has been held in a Karachi jail since he returned early last month from Damascus after 16 years of self-imposed exile.

Airport reluctant to accept Israel airliners

TOKYO (R) — A new international airport in western Japan is reluctant to accept regular passenger flights from Israel for fear of possible violence, the Asahi Shimbun newspaper reported Saturday. Kansai International Airport Co. operators of the Kansai airport which opens next September, argued it would be too costly to guard against attacks, Asahi said.

Christopher ready to help self-rule talks

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher began talks Saturday with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin after saying he would try to help the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) autonomy negotiations if both sides asked him. "If I was asked by both parties to do something I would, but I don't want to impose myself in any way," Mr. Christopher told reporters before joining Mr. Rabin for dinner. Israel and the PLO must agree on implementation of the autonomy accord by Dec. 13, when Israel is to start withdrawing from the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho. But Mr. Rabin has said it could take another week or two beyond the deadline to reach a clear-cut agreement. The PLO reiterated its total rejection of any delay in the implementation of its self-rule deal with Israel. "The PLO Executive Committee totally rejects (attempts to) delay or get rid (of) the schedule to achieve the commitments fixed for the first stage of the agreement and particularly the full withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area and the transfer of authorities in all the Palestinian territories to the Palestinian National Authority," an official PLO statement issued in Tunis said. "The Executive Committee

invited all the negotiations committees to stick to the basics of the (PLO-Israeli) agreements," the statement said. Israel's army chief Ehud Barak said on Saturday it was doubtful Israeli troops would start withdrawing on Dec. 13. Israel and the PLO are at loggerheads over the scope of the withdrawal, the security measures for the Jewish settlements and control of border crossings. The two sides are also discussing the release of about 12,000 Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons, and the PLO Executive Committee statement said "the release of all of them is not a matter for arguing or negotiations." The PLO urged Washington and Moscow, co-sponsors of the peace talks, to help implement Palestinian autonomy. But Mr. Rabin has rejected the call for American intervention. "I have been active in the situation at the request of the parties," Mr. Christopher said in occupied Jerusalem Saturday. "It is a situation where the parties who negotiated a declaration of principles between themselves are now talking about the interpretation of the agreement," he added. "I don't know if there is an appropriate role for me," he said. In other developments related to the peace process:

— Syria said it was Washington's duty to put Syrian-Israeli peace talks back on track. The only way to do so was for Israel to make a commitment to withdraw from every inch of the Golan Heights, it added. In the editorial published on Saturday, the government newspaper Tishreen said: "It is time for the United States to shoulder its responsibilities and rescue peace efforts which are threatened now more than at any time in the past. This requires turning words into deeds." Syria has repeatedly explained there will be no bargaining on an iota of Golan soil and that it will not go into the tunnels of negotiations with Israel without getting a commitment by Israel in advance accepting the principle of full withdrawal from the Golan," it added. "The activation of the Syrian-Israeli peace track is subject to Israel's full withdrawal from the Golan," the newspaper said. The editorial did not specifically mention the possibility of a meeting between U.S. President Bill Clinton and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad but it welcomed what it described as a U.S. move towards Syria. In Washington on Friday, White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers said Mr. Clinton was interested in con-

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Settlers hit Hebron again

HEBRON, occupied West Bank (R) — Jewish settlers opposed to Israel's peace accord with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) shot and seriously wounded an Arab at a roadblock and opened fire on houses in Hebron on Saturday, police and witnesses said. In Gaza City, in the occupied Gaza Strip, Israeli soldiers shot and wounded a Palestinian teenager while dispersing a demonstration of 2,000 marchers calling for the release of the Fateh Hawks' leader. Fateh Hawks is the armed wing of the PLO's mainstream faction Fateh in the Gaza Strip. The demonstration began peacefully but a 13-year-old Palestinian boy was shot and wounded in clashes with soldiers trying to break up the crowd, witnesses said. A senior Fateh official in the Gaza Strip, Sami Abu Samad-

neh, said his organisation had proposed to Israeli authorities the temporary expulsion of Fateh Hawks leader Tayseer Bordini who was arrested Monday. Mr. Samadneh said Mr. Bordini would return to Gaza in the coming weeks with other PLO officials, adding that Fateh had never called for an end to the anti-Israeli uprising. Elsewhere, an Israeli army major beat and detained in AFP photographer for five hours in the West Bank town of Ramallah. The officer jumped on Awad Awad as he photographed clashes between soldiers and Palestinian demonstrators and clubbed him on the head to prevent him from taking pictures. Mr. Awad was then taken to the Ramallah police station and his films were confiscated. Israeli soldiers also hit Atar Wissad, a photographer for the Israeli daily Yediot Aharonot,

and broke his camera. The soldiers had not specified that Ramallah was a "closed military zone," which they usually do to bar media coverage. Three other AFP photographers, Patrick Baz, Fayez Nureddin and Menachem Kahana, were roughed up by Israeli soldiers in the occupied territories in recent days and the news agency on Saturday filed a complaint with the Israeli army spokesman. Residents said about 80 settlers went on the rampage in the Hebron area of the West Bank. At least 10 were carrying Uzi submachineguns. It was the third straight day of violence in the area. West Bank settlers say they aim to undermine the PLO-Israeli agreement on Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza. Settlers shot and threw

(Continued on page 5)

Jordan-PLO draft accord a key topic in Arafat's talks here

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter
AMMAN — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, who is scheduled to arrive here Sunday and possibly finalise a draft economic agreement between Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) during his visit, senior officials said yesterday. The officials said Jordan was informed by PLO officials that Chairman Arafat was ready to consider the protocol, which was drafted by Jordanian and PLO officials and sent to Tunis in late September. Mr. Arafat arrives today for talks with His Majesty King Hussein and a meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who is due here tomorrow. The PLO chairman will meet Mr. Christopher again in Tunis on Friday at the expected conclusion of the U.S. secretary's Middle East visit aimed at revitalising the Syrian-Israeli track of negotiations and removing snags from the Israeli-PLO negotiations. Mr. Arafat had been holding out against the economic

protocol with Jordan hoping to wrench Israeli permission for a Palestinian central bank and currency during the interim five-year period envisaged under the Israel-PLO accord, PLO sources said. "He also wanted to ensure that the (envisaged) Palestinian entity will not fall under the economic domination of any external party," said one PLO source. But Jordanian officials said the draft document was very flexible and left the door open for the Palestinian authority to exercise its options based on the outcome of "final status" negotiations, including a Palestinian monetary body and Palestinian currency. In the meantime, Jordan has to remain involved to a large extent in the Palestinian monetary affairs since the Jordanian dinar remains in circulation in the occupied territories. In any event, the officials said, it was too premature for the Palestinians to set up their own central bank and issue their own currency because they lacked the basic "ingredients" to do so. "It is easy to print and issue currency," said a senior

official. "But how are they (the Palestinians) going to provide a monetary base for the currency and to defend the currency as legal tender?" Among other things, including trade relations and flow of goods between Jordan and the occupied territories, the draft protocol on economic cooperation calls for Jordanian control of the banking and monetary affairs of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and the continued circulation there of the Jordanian dinar during the interim period. Mr. Arafat's new approach to the draft accord came after several rounds of economic talks with Israel in Paris, when "it became clear that Israel will not allow the setting up of a Palestinian central bank during the interim period," said a diplomatic source. Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali alluded to the pending accord with the PLO when he Saturday emphasised the importance of stepped up Jordanian-Palestinian coordination "at this critical stage." (Continued on page 5)

King, Estonian president hold formal talks on Mideast, ties

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday held formal talks with Estonian President Lennart Meri on various regional and international issues. During the meeting, which was held at the Raghdan Palace, the two leaders discussed ways of enhancing future cooperation between the two countries, especially in the economic and scientific domains, as well as means of establishing bilateral relations in all fields. "We talked a lot about possibilities of cooperation," President Meri said in an interview with Jordan Television. "With the technology we have developed in Estonia, we hope we can be of much use to the future Jordanian oil shale industry." Estonia, which gained independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991, is considered one of the leading countries in the technology of oil shale — one of the future and important sources of energy for the production of electricity. The Estonian leader expressed appreciation of King Hussein's stands and wise and courageous policy in light of recent events and developments in the region. He also voiced pride in Jordan's stands and efforts vis-a-vis the Arab-Israeli peace process aimed at achieving permanent, comprehensive and just peace in the region, pointing also to Jordan's laudable participation in the international peace-keeping



His Majesty King Hussein Saturday greets visiting Estonian President Lennart Meri (photo by Yousef Al 'Allan)

forces in various regions in the world. King's military secretary, and several ministers and senior officials. President Meri visited in the morning the Martyr's Monument as well as the tombs of the late King Abdullah and King Talal. Attending the meeting were the prime minister, Abdul Salam Majali, the King's Political advisor Marwan Al Oqsem and His Royal Highness Prince Talal, the

King sends message to Yemeni leaders

AMMAN (AP) — His Majesty King Hussein has sent Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker to Yemen, inviting rival northern and southern leaders to come to Amman for reconciliation talks, senior officials said Saturday. They said Sharif Zeid, a former prime minister, returned from Sanaa after meeting with President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who is locked in a dispute with vice presidential nominee Ali Salem Al Beedh. King Hussein is a close personal friend of both Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beedh, who used to rule North and South Yemen before the two countries merged in May 1990. The officials said King Hussein invited Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beedh to meet in Amman to discuss their political differences, stemming from the southern leader's charges that northerners were trying to turn the merger into annexation and dominate the country. They said Sharif Zeid, who carried messages from King Hussein to the two Yemeni leaders in October, also met with Mr. Beedh in Aden and pressed the King's mediation. The Jordan News Agency, Petra, confirmed that Sharif Zeid and King Hussein's adviser, Khalid Karaki, returned from Yemen Saturday after delivering letters to Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beedh from the Monarch. It said the letters dealt with "the latest Arab developments and King Hussein's keenness for the unity and democracy in Yemen and the importance of overcoming any differences that could threaten them." Yemenis held their first post-merger parliament elections in April this year. Mr. Saleh's General Peoples Congress and Mr. Beedh's Yemeni Socialist Party formed a coalition government. The coalition hit trouble when the president invited the Islamic fundamentalist Islah party to join the government after it did unexpectedly well in the elections. Mr. Beedh withdrew to his southern stronghold of Aden, capital of the former South Yemen, and has boycotted all official functions, including his own swearing-in as vice president.

Majali hopes Christopher mission will end peace process logjam

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali said Jordan hoped that Middle East swing would help revive peace negotiations between Israel and the Arab rivals. Dr. Majali said Jordan was looking forward to the visit in order to discuss bilateral relations and to help give momentum to the peace process. "We all believe in comprehensive peace and not a partial peace between states. We view the visit as an important one because we hope it would result in breaking the deadlock in

the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli tracks." "As to the Jordanian track, I should point out there are bilateral relations between Jordan and the U.S., and at the same time there exists a tripartite committee grouping Jordan-Israel and the U.S., which is entrusted with discussing topics on the peace agenda," he said. The United States has decided to be active or more active now than before in every item on the agenda. "We hope to witness such

development during December and to see peace (talks) convened in Washington before the end of 1993, so that this year might be called the year of peace or the beginning of the real peace so that the peoples of this region can enjoy peace following conflicts of the past half century," Dr. Majali told the Jordan News Agency Petra. Mr. Christopher flies Monday to Amman, where he will meet with His Majesty King Hussein and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Vote of confidence debate begins; Majali sure to win, but not by big majority

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter
AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament today began debating a vote of confidence in the government of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali amidst expectations that Dr. Majali will win the confidence of the legislature with a narrow margin. More than 60 deputies have requested to take the floor in what is expected to be a marathon session during which many will criticise the government's foreign and domestic policy, observers and deputies say. Dr. Majali asked for the confidence of the House Nov. 30 after adopting the Speech from the Throne as his policy statement. Islamists and leftist deputies contend that Dr. Majali's refrain from presenting his own policy statement violates the spirit of the democratic process even though Dr. Majali says he is obliged by the Constitution to consider the Speech, with which His Majesty King Hussein opened the 12th Parliament, as his policy statement. The 17-member Islamic Action Front (IAF) bloc will withhold confidence from the government of Dr. Majali due to the composition of the

Cabinet, its participation in the peace process as well as its actions during and before the Nov. 8 IAF Deputy Hammam Said. IAF sources say Dr. Majali will come under fire from the majority of the front's deputies who will deliver speeches during the vote of confidence session, which is expected to last until Wednesday. They say the IAF deputies will announce a vote of no confidence in the government for dissolving the 11th Parliament and unilaterally changing the Election Law. Deputies who spoke to the Jordan Times said that Dr. Majali will not be able to get the confidence of more than 50 deputies in the 80-member legislature, pointing out that the premier has alienated a number of deputies by "ignoring" them when he introduced changes to his Cabinet Wednesday. There is a general feeling that the prime minister did not pay enough attention to the deputies and their demands when he reshuffled the government, said one deputy. "That will reflect in their votes." Observers say that lawmakers are determined to assert their authority during the confidence session in reaction to statements that

expected the legislature to be a docile one that will automatically give a vote of confidence to Dr. Majali. While the IAF bloc has announced it would not give Dr. Majali a vote of confidence, other parliamentary blocs are not revealing their positions. The 22-member Progressive Democratic Coalition (PDC) Saturday held a meeting to discuss its stand on the government but no decision was reached, PDC sources said. "We are still debating the issue but no decision has been reached yet," PDC member deputy Sa'ad Hayal Srour said. Mr. Srour, who occupies one of two seats assigned for bedouins in the north, said the coalition will try to have a unified position on whether to give or withhold a vote of confidence in the government. Deputy Nawaf Al Qadi, the occupant of the Northern Badia's second seat and who is a member of the Jordan National Front (JNF) indicated that his eight-member bloc will give a vote of confidence in the government of Dr. Majali. "Our vote will be in the national interest of the country, Abdul Salam Pasha deserves that vote," he said. Dr. Abdul Razzaq

Tubeishat (Irbid) said the Independent Bloc, which has five independent Islamists besides himself, has decided not to commit its members to a unified vote but refused to indicate what the tendency was among his group. "The general tendency is to cast a vote of confidence in favour of the government," Speaker of the National Action Front Fawzi Tameeh (Balqa) told the Jordan Times. Observers also say that his 18-member bloc, headed by Deputy Abdul Hadi Al Majali (Karak), will vote in favour of Dr. Majali and his team. Observers say that even though Dr. Majali will be able to get the confidence of the House, many deputies will not cast their votes in his favour before pressing him hard on the government's domestic policies and demanding commitments to meet their requirements. Lawmakers say the debate of the vote of confidence will centre on government's handling of the economy, the democratic process and other local issues. They say that even though the issue of the peace process would be raised, the focus would be on issues of bread and butter that dominated the election campaign for the 12th Parliament.

U.S. toughens Libya sanctions

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The White House has implemented new economic sanctions against Libya intended to pressure Tripoli into surrendering up Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988.

The explosion killed 270 people, including 11 on the ground. "The actions signal that Libya cannot continue to defy justice and flout the will of the international community with impunity," White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers said.

"We remain determined to ensure the perpetrators of these acts of terrorism are brought to justice," Ms. Myers said.

The sanctions, approved by the United Nations Security Council Nov. 11 at the urging of the United States, Britain and France, officially took effect on Wednesday.

The White House offered no explanation for its two-day delay in implementing them.

U.N. Security Council Resolution 883 freezes assets owned or controlled by the government of Libya around the world and bans the provision of equipment to refine and transport oil.

However, the sanctions exclude future funds derived from oil, natural gas or agricultural commodities exports. Nor do they ban provision of production equipment used by Libya to drill for oil.

Ms. Myers said the president instructed Commerce Secretary Ron Brown to strengthen the existing U.S. trade embargo against Libya by banning the sale from foreign countries to Libya of U.S.-made goods including oil refining and transporting equipment.

Mr. Clinton also extended another year an existing comprehensive financial and trade embargo against Tripoli that puts all trade with Libya in the hands of the U.S. treasury and freezes all Libyan government

assets in U.S. hands.

Ms. Myers reiterated the U.S. view that stronger sanctions including a world-wide oil embargo were merited against Libya, a move for which global support is lacking.

To date there has been no visible sign from Libya that it would surrender the Lockerbie suspects, Abdul Baset Ali, Mohammad Al Meghbrahi and Al Amin Khalifa Fhimah, who have been indicted in the United States and Britain in connection with the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103.

Libya denies the charges. France and Britain are also seeking to extradite two Libyan intelligence agents suspected of being linked to the bombing of a French UTA airliner over Niger in 1989 that killed 170 people.

Libyan government assets in the United States have been frozen since 1986 but President Clinton's order renewed that blockage, according to the statement issued by Ms. Myers.

The statement was issued in New Mexico, where Mr. Clinton stopped briefly on route to California.

The U.S. continues to believe the still stronger measures, including a world-wide oil embargo, should be enacted if Libya continues to defy the international community," the statement said.

Some European nations dependent on Libyan oil imports have opposed the U.S. efforts to force an oil embargo.

Britain seeks to ban film

Britain is seeking to ban television stations from screening a controversial Libyan-backed documentary about the Lockerbie bombing, Scottish lawyers said.

The lawyers, who declined to be named, said the lord advocate, the minister responsible for legal affairs in Scotland, would seek a court order barring any showing of the film on legal grounds.



CONTINUING FURY: Palestinian youths throw stones at Israeli soldiers in Ramallah Saturday as unrest continued in the territories in response to Israeli army actions against Palestinians. In Hebron, Jewish settlers shot and wounded three Palestinians (AFP photo)

Exiles shop, start to pack up

MARJ AL ZOUBOUR, Lebanon (AFP) — Palestinian expellees in southern Lebanon have started packing their bags ahead of their return to the occupied territories later this month, and some have even ventured north to do some shopping.

"I bought this in Beirut. They're gifts for my three kids. My wife told them I had been away abroad," said Mohammad Shehadeh, as he packed children's clothes into a black vinyl bag.

For several weeks ahead of their planned repatriation on Dec. 17, some of the 215 expellees have taken turns to visit other parts of Lebanon using false documents identifying them as Palestinian refugees.

Around 10 have left their camp in no-man's-land in South Lebanon clandestinely for other destinations in their country or have travelled abroad, reliable sources said.

Bassam Yousef Al Saifi, a 35-year-old karate instructor from the occupied Gaza Strip, reportedly had taken the photographs he had taken in the northern Lebanese coastal town of Tripoli, where he took

part in a martial arts contest. "It is the first time I have travelled outside the territory," Mr. Saifi said.

Last December Israel expelled to Lebanon 415 member or supporters of two Palestinian organisations — Islamic Jihad and the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) — after the death of an Israeli border guard.

It repatriated around 200 expellees in September and agreed to repatriate the others on Dec. 17.

However, some of them, like the exiles' spokesman Abdul Aziz Rantisi, expect to go to jail in Israel, rather than to their homes in the occupied territories.

"I think I will go to jail. It will be proof that the (Israeli) occupation is just as it was before," the signing of the Israeli-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) autonomy accord on Sept. 13, Dr. Rantisi told AFP.

Sheikh Abdullah Shami, a leader of the Islamic Jihad, expects the same fate.

"I know that I'll be facing administrative detention as soon as I return, because of the political statements I have made here," he said.

"The Israelis will put all of us in jail and will release only a few of us at a time, to ensure that the Palestinian people do not organise huge festivities to mark our return," he added.

Meanwhile, the exiles have set up a committee to prepare for their return.

Excess equipment — tents, blankets, heaters and foam mattresses — is being loaded onto mules and returned to secret donors in villages near their camp.

Archives and documents are also being collected to be put in safe places.

"Two days before we go, we'll pack most of the contents of the camp. The Palestinians and Lebanese parties will take back that they brought us," Dr. Rantisi said, referring to individuals who over the past year smuggled goods and food to the men across Lebanese army lines.

The Beirut government has refused to take responsibility for the exiles.

Morocco accuses Amnesty of exaggerated reports of rights abuse

RABAT (R) — Foreign human rights groups exaggerate reports of abuses in Morocco and keep complaining about problems which were solved long ago, the official consultative council on human rights said Friday.

Thami Khairi, the council's press spokesman, told a news conference that London-based Amnesty International, the U.S. State Department and other foreign groups "have a tendency to exaggerate... and basically reproach us for what happened in the distant past."

"They give the impression that Morocco is a concentration camp... that there are secret detention centres," he added. He denied there were any secret centres.

Morocco was ready to provide vehicles, even aircraft, to enable critics to visit what were alleged to be secret detention centres "on condition that the press will accompany them also to see for themselves."

In a Nov. 18 report, Amnesty said 80 Moroccans and 483 people from Western Sahara had "disappeared." It also said there were 560 political prisoners, including more than 150 prisoners of conscience.

The report was due to be discussed at a meeting between the council and two Amnesty representatives, Elizabeth Hodkin and Donatella Rovera, who are spending two weeks in the country making inquiries.

Mr. Khairi said Amnesty's list of Saharans dated back to 1975-76 when fighting began in the former Spanish colony. It was based on names provided by Polisario guerrillas. He said it included many dead people, some killed in the fighting, and unknown names impossible to verify.

Two years ago King Hassan ordered the release of more than 200 Western Saharans detained for years on suspicion of collusion with the Polisario.

Morocco has always denied it holds any political prisoners. Mohammad Ziane, a member of the council named by the king three years ago, said the accepted definition of a political prisoner was someone who tried to change a regime by peaceful means.

"But anyone who tries to overthrow a regime by force of arms is not a political prisoner," he added, in an apparent reference of those involved in abortive military coups against the Moroccan monarchy in 1971 and 1972.

Survivors of the two coups jailed by military courts have all been freed, along with about 50 people — most of them leftists jailed for plotting to overthrow the monarchy.

Mr. Khairi said the council had not received any submission on behalf of Abdul Salam Yassine, leader of the outlawed Muslim fundamentalist movement Adl Wal Ihsan, who has been under house arrest near Rabat for nearly three years.

"If we receive a complaint about his situation we will examine it," he said.

Council Secretary-General Mohammad Mikou said in a prepared statement the council had set up groups to study prison conditions, revisions of the penal code, relations with foreign rights groups, and the problem of people being held against their will by the Polisario in camps in the Tindouf area of Algeria.

Belgian inquiry rejects Somalia misconduct claim

BRUSSELS (R) — A Belgian Defence Ministry inquiry released on Friday rejected claims of gross misconduct by Belgian troops against Somalis, but found that soldiers often had little compassion for the local population.

The inquiry said there had been some isolated incidents of "unacceptable behaviour" by the 900 troops based in the southern Somali port of Kismayu, but that these had been dealt with by the military or relevant authorities.

"Without any doubt, Belgian troops achieved very good results in their zone of responsibility," the report said. Belgian troops, who will be replaced by Indians when they withdraw from Kismayu this month, were sent to the Horn of Africa country a year ago as part of the United Nations operation there.

The inquiry said Belgian troops had felt let down soon after their arrival when confronted by a "tough and arrogant" population where women and children did most of the manual work.

"Although staying mobilised and devoted to humanitarian aid and to situations of distress, the soldiers progressively took an attitude of strictly executing orders and missions, without much sympathy or compassion for the Somalis," the report said.

The inquiry was called after a Belgian radio journalist and the independent human rights group Africa Rights alleged that Belgian troops based in Kismayu were guilty of the murder of civilians and beatings.

Alex de Waal of London-based Africa Rights told Reuters he stood by his own report, adding that he did not consider the Belgian inquiry objective.

"In fact, we keep hearing more and more allegations. The Belgian investigation cannot be considered as reliable."

Mr. De Waal said in a telephone interview.

The defence ministry said Belgian troops had killed 31 Somalis and wounded 28. This figure did not include deaths in clan combat situations where Belgian troops had intervened.

Mr. De Waal said he believed at least 200 Somalis had been killed by Belgian troops, but said it was hard to provide an exact figure.

Mr. De Waal's July report described the Belgian force as being particularly brutal and hated as a virtual army of occupation in the port, which has often been a flashpoint of violence.

Among incidents highlighted was an eye-witness report claiming Belgians had killed an armed man and dragged his body through the streets behind a tank. A live man was allegedly pulled 400 metres behind a military vehicle.

However, the Belgian defence ministry inquiry said these and other serious accusations were without substance.

"Sometimes there were minor incidents... but these were exaggerated, distorted or transformed into reprehensible deeds. In other cases, they amounted to pure and simple lies," the report said.

About 120 people, including Somalis and the military, were interviewed by the Belgian military investigators.

Outlining Western attitudes towards the Somalis, the inquiry said that in the eyes of many Westerners, Somalis were viewed as proud people who were often arrogant.

"The value and the price of human life has apparently another meaning than in the West. There is a sort of banality of life and death," the report said.

"Women and children are often present in conflict situations and are sometimes used as human shields, or throwers of grenades," it added.

Turkish troops forcibly empty Christian village

ANKARA (R) — Turkish authorities have driven 200 Christians from a village in southeast Turkey, scene of a nine-year-old Kurdish revolt, residents said.

State-paid village guards detained and tortured seven Christian shepherds in the same area, using molten plastic to brand one of their victims with a cross, the residents said.

They said 32 Syrian Christian families, the entire 200-strong population of Hassana village, in Mardin province, had been forced to leave their homes last month.

"An order came through Siliopi security headquarters last month, telling them to evacuate Hassana by Nov. 20," a Syrian Christian in the nearby town of Midyat told Reuters.

"It happened because a local tribal leader said on television that it was an Armenian village," he said.

"Then immediately they were told to get out. Most have been moved to homes in Yunuk village next door, some to Midyat and some to Mardin (town)," he added.

"We are not Armenians, we are Syrians," he said.

Turks say Armenians support the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), allowing guerrillas to train in Armenia from where they cross the borders to attacks targets in southeast Turkey.

Prime Minister Tansu Ciller has often criticised neighbour-

ing Armenia, Syria, Iran and Iraq for aiding the independence-seeking PKK.

In a separate incident last week, village guards investigating an arson attack on an electricity station in Alagoz village in Mardin province seized seven Syrian Christian shepherds, some of whom are deaf-mutes, residents said.

The shepherds were tortured and one had a cross burnt into his chest with molten plastic, according to a resident who saw them after their release.

The men were freed after a night in detention on the orders of a Turkish army officer in Mardin.

The residents refused to be identified, saying they feared reprisals.

Only about 3,000 Syrian Christians still live in southeast Turkey, the remnants of one of the most ancient Christian communities in the Middle East. Many have migrated to Sweden in recent years, partly because of the Kurdish insurgency.

More than 10,300 people have been killed in Turkey since the PKK began its armed struggle for independence in 1984. Ankara pays and arms about 35,000 Kurdish villagers to fight the PKK.

On Friday, the Turkish news agency Anatolia said separatist guerrillas killed three soldiers and wounded 10 in an overnight raid on a militia post in the southeast province of Siirt.

9 held for Sedki bomb attack

CAIRO (Agencies) — Nine militants believed to have carried out an abortive assassination attempt on Egyptian Prime Minister Atef Sedki last month have been arrested, Interior Minister Hassan Al Ali said Saturday.

The nine, who were members of the underground fundamentalist Al Jihad organisation and its military wing, Taleah Al Fatah (Vanguards of the Conquest), were arrested recently in the Cairo area and the Nile Delta province of Menoufiya, General Ali said.

Dr. Sedki narrowly escaped a car-bomb blast on Nov. 25 which killed a schoolgirl and injured nine others.

Al Jihad, which assassinated former President Anwar Sadat in 1981, had said its members carried out the attack to avenge mass arrests and executions of militants seeking to topple the government of President Hosni Mubarak.

Gen. Ali said the security services had seized 20 kilograms of explosives, five home-made bombs, three automatic rifles, 11 pistols, nine remote control devices and bomb-making equipment.

One of the nine suspects had bought the car which was used in the bombing, Gen. Ali said, identifying him as Sayyed Salah Al Sayyed, sentenced in absentia to three years in jail

during trials involving 208 Taleah Al Fatah members.

Mr. Sayyed was arrested in a hideout in the Quesnina region of Menoufiya province, where police seized a rough sketch of the prime minister's route from his house in the northern neighbourhood of Heliopolis to his office in downtown Cairo, the interior minister said.

On Nov. 25, carbomb went off outside a suburban girls' school as Dr. Sedki's motorcade passed. Dr. Sedki was unhurt. But a 12-year-old student was killed by a school-house door knocked from its hinges, and four of her fellow pupils were among 21 people wounded.

Asserting that a remote-control device triggered the bomb marked a major change in the government's version of the attack.

Gen. Ali's interior ministry initially said it was detonated by a timer, which raised an uproar among some newspaper columnists and other commentators. Their point was that as worrisome as the introduction of remote-control violence was, it was far more so to consider that the government was sufficiently infiltrated to let bombers predict the prime minister's schedule to the minute.

Gen. Ali said the nine suspects were "highly trained in Afghanistan in the use of explosive materials." But he counselled against undue concern because their bomb indicated extremists have developed the capability to trigger weapons from afar.

"Remote controls are even used in children's toys now," Gen. Ali said. "We have ways to confront it, and it should not worry us."

Jihad claimed responsibility for the attack on Dr. Sedki, the third this year against a cabinet minister. Jihad and the Vanguards of Conquest probably are the most violent of Islamic groups aligned against President Mubarak's government, trying to institute Islamic law in Egypt through the bullet and the bomb.

But despite their penchant for violence, the accused assailants were apprehended in "downtown streets in broad daylight... and without shedding one drop of blood," Gen. Ali said.

Western human rights groups have repeatedly accused Egyptian police of torture and other abuses against Muslim extremists.

In southern Egypt on Saturday, two suspected extremists shot and wounded a police guard outside a police station, then fled. Police said the guard, Ibrahim Al Khatib, 37, was shot in the foot near Assiut, 320 kilometres south of Cairo.

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JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 723111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30	Feature Film "Line Tenhouse Affair"
18:00	News in French
18:15	Feature Film "Line Tenhouse Affair"
19:30	News in Arabic
20:30	You Bet Your Life
21:10	Thurs evening
22:00	News in English
22:30	
23:10	"The Men Who Killed Kennedy"
23:10	"The Golden Palace"

PRAYER TIMES

06:54	Fajr
07:16	Sunrise
11:26	Dhuhr
14:12	Asr
16:36	Maghreb
17:58	Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church	Swefieh, Tel. 61781
Assemblies of God Church	Tel. 62785
St. Joseph Church	Tel. 62450
The Church of the Annunciation	Tel. 62740
De la Salle Church	Tel. 661757
Terrassaneta Church	Tel. 622266

Church of the Annunciation

Tel. 623541

Anglican Church

Tel. 62851, Tel. 62843

Armenian Catholic Church

Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church

Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church

Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church

Tel. 625236

Evangelical Lutheran Church

Tel. 624328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation

Tel. 641495

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth

Tel. 627591

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Moderate weather conditions will prevail and winds will be southwesterly moderate. In Amman, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 19, Aqaba 23. Humidity readings: Amman 38 per cent, Aqaba 48 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDER

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Mikhles Hadasa	819221
Dr. Mohammad Al Nahawi	819213
Dr. Jamil Maraghi	776149
Dr. Jamil Barah	647351
Firay pharmacy	661912
Furdous pharmacy	776336
Al Asma pharmacy	637055
Naimouk pharmacy	626762
Yacoub pharmacy	649455
Shimouni pharmacy	637660
Najib pharmacy	847632

IRBID:

Dr. Mohammad Al Khalili	(—)
Alkub pharmacy	(—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Ziyad Alami	(—)
Khalid pharmacy	785417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Civil Defence Immediate	
Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police	102, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	891228
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896309
Public Security Department	636721
Hotel Complaints	645800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	897467
Complaints	787111
Amman Municipality	
Complaints	787111
Telephone Information	(directory assistance)
Traffic Police	121
Overseas Calls	010231
Central Amman Telephone	
Reprints	625101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	775111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Company	661101
Electric Power	636381
RJ Flight Information	165320
Queen Alia Intl. Airport	165320

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre	813813-32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn.	642404
Alkhalidi Maternity, J. Amn.	642402
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Malika, J. Amman	641714
Palatine, Shmouni	641714
Shmouni Hospital	845845
Al-Muasher Hospital	662727
The Islamic, Abdali	666127
Al-Ahli, Abdali	666144
Italian, Al-Muhajirin	777103
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh	775111-26
Army, Marika	891615
Queen Alia Hospital	602340-50
Amal Hospital	674159
Zurqawi Hospital	109983323
Zurqawi National Hospital	109983323
El-Sina Hospital	109983323
Al-Nadhes Hospital	1021247101
Al-Hilma Modern Hospital	10910094

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital	102127555
Greek Catholic Hospital	102127555
El-Sina Hospital	109983323
Al-Nadhes Hospital	1021247101

AQABA:

Princess Ilaya Hospital	1051514111
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INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport. Tel. (06) 623125, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:15	Bangkok (RJ)
07:30	Aqaba (RJ)
08:35	Damascus (RJ)
09:00	Frankfurt (RJ)
10:50	Varna (RJ)
11:10	Rome (RJ)
11:30	Tripoli, Qasabana (RJ)
11:30	Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:00	Algeria (RJ)
12:45	Cairo (RJ)
13:00	Riyadh (RJ)
13:30	Jeddah (RJ)
14:00	Doha (RJ)
14:45	Damascus (RJ)
15:15	New Delhi (RJ)
15:30	Doha, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
16:45	Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
17:25	Bangkok (RJ)
17:55	Paris, Brussels (RJ)
18:30	London (RJ)
18:35	Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
19:30	Amman (RJ)
19:30	Frankfurt (RJ)
19:30	Varna (RJ)
20:00	Rome (RJ)
20:00	Aqaba (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

11:00	Damascus (AZ
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King confers medals on former ministers

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday conferred the Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order on the former members of the Cabinet of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali.

Dr. Majali, who made the announcement to the Cabinet Saturday, said that ministers who are still serving in the government following the reshuffle of last Wednesday will also receive the medal. Seven ministers left the

Cabinet in the change which brought six first-time members to the Council of Ministers.

Dr. Majali said the Al Kawkab Medal was conferred in recognition of the ministers' efforts and their outstanding service to the nation.

With the decoration, said the prime minister, the King is urging all Cabinet members to step up their efforts and pursue the process of construction to attain the country's objectives. Praising the outgoing minis-

ters for their endeavours, Dr. Majali said he was certain that the new Cabinet members would spare no effort in serving their country with equal enthusiasm, dedication and high spirits.

He added that government would maintain links with them because of their vast experiences which would continue to serve the nation.

Meanwhile, newly-appointed Minister of Water and Irrigation Hisham Al Kh-

tib, who was abroad when the reshuffle took place, was sworn in at the Royal Court Saturday before King Hussein in the presence of Dr. Majali and the King's advisers.

Also sworn in before the King at the Royal Court Saturday was Trad Al Fayed, the newly-appointed ambassador to Qatar. Present at the ceremony was Dr. Majali and Ministers of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan.

Queen receives Mrs. Meri, Princess Shaharian at NHF

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Saturday received at Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) Mrs. Helle Meri, wife of Estonian President Lennart Meri and briefed her on the foundation's development mission and philosophy.

Queen Noor and Mrs. Meri also discussed means of cooperation between NHF and Estonian development institutions.

During a slide presentation, NHF Communication and Development Specialist Dr. Sima Bahous said that the foundation, established in 1985, seeks to identify and meet different developmental needs in Jordan and introduce innovative and dynamic integrated community development models in the areas of family and community development, women, children, culture and heritage and education.



Her Majesty Queen Noor Saturday receives Mrs. Helle Meri, wife of Estonian President Lennart Meri, at Noor Al Hussein Foundation (Petra photo)

during which Mr. Meri held talks with His Majesty King Hussein and other Jordanian officials on bilateral relations and other issues.

Also at NHF, Queen Noor received Her Royal Highness Princess Tunku Shaharian, daughter of the former Malaysian king and chairperson of the Muslim Women's Welfare Council in the Malaysian state of Johor.

Princess Shaharian and an accompanying delegation were briefed on the development work and philosophy of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation and discussed with NHF officials prospects for future cooperation.

Largest travel trade association seeks to promote Jordan

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Promoting Jordanian tourism on the world stage was the main topic discussed by American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) officials with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities during a short visit to Amman last week.

ASTA President and Chief Executive Officer Earlene Causey, and ASTA Director of Government Affairs Barbara O'Hara, visited tourist sights in Jordan and discussed with Minister of Tourism Mohammad Al Adwan ways to expand Jordan's tourism industry, promote its name in the U.S. market on wide scale, and the possibility of increasing the number of nights American tourists spend in the Kingdom, according to Dr. Adwan.

"ASTA is a big organisation that has good contacts with travel agents worldwide and conducts annual meetings with the U.S. Congress which should benefit Jordan's tourist industry on an international level," Dr. Adwan said.

ASTA, which was founded in 1931 and includes more than

23,000 members in 130 countries, is the largest and most influential travel trade association in the world. It aims to promote tourism and help countries, regions and cities improve their tourism industries.

Its mission also includes enhancing the professionalism and profitability of member agents through effective representation in industry and government affairs, education and training, and by identifying and meeting the needs of the travelling public.

Ms. Causey said the tourism industry in Jordan faces many obstacles, one of which is lack of recognition in the West.

"Jordan has not done that much advertising to speak off in the U.S., and it is important to show people what Jordan has," Ms. Causey said.

She said some governments in the region are to be blamed for ignoring that tourism is important to their economies.

must promote and advertise at an international level to fight negative propaganda, adding that Israel for example faces the same circumstances in the region, still, tourists are not deterred from visiting Israel.

"Jordan is stable like Israel, but Israel advertises constantly and is always in magazines," she maintained.

"Jordan does not take the same initiatives... partly because it lacks the necessary funds and financial support as I understood from the Jordanian officials," said Ms. Causey.

Looking towards the future, she said a peace agreement between Arabs and Israel will play a big role in boosting tourism in the region.

"A peace accord is going to make a big difference," she said, adding that it will encourage more Americans to visit the region.

Ms. Causey said it is important to tie all the area together in suitable package, and the peace process will serve the purpose.

Dr. Adwan said that Jordan was asked to join an agreement on establishing the East Mediterranean Tourism Association (EMTA) signed recent-

ly by Israel, Turkey and Egypt. "But we refused the offer because we tied it to the peace process," Dr. Adwan told the Jordan Times.

He added that one of the main topics on the negotiating agenda was tourism.

"Of course, the peace process will have an immediate impact on every facet of Jordanian life and especially on tourism because it will bring with it many challenges, and we ought to be prepared to face all possibilities and to benefit from the peace process," Dr. Adwan said.

'Siberian' pressure blamed for no rain

AMMAN (Petra) — The Department of Meteorology Saturday issued a statement saying that the so-called high Siberian pressure has prevented low depressions from affecting the eastern parts of the Mediterranean resulting in a three-week period of no rain.

Department Director Ali Abanda said that the Siberian pressure was expected to move eastward as of Tuesday, making way for the low depressions to arrive in Jordan and other parts of the east Mediterranean.

Normally, the rainy season begins towards end of September in Jordan, lasting until the following May, but this year the rainy season started about mid-October and stopped in mid-November because of the effect of the Siberian pressure, said Dr. Abanda.

He said that as of Tuesday the country can expect its first low depression, bringing rain with high winds from the north of Europe.

Only scattered thunderstorms fell in several areas in the Kingdom since mid-November, mostly in Rweished and the eastern desert regions, he said.

Some of the rain falling in the desert in the past month caused limited floods, according to Dr. Abanda.

The Department of Meteorology Saturday said that light easterly winds will continue with temperatures rising to 18°C during the day and dropping to nearly 5°C at night, but there would be almost no change in weather conditions from now and until Monday evening.

Prime Minister to visit Japan

U.N. meeting, talks with officials on itinerary

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali will visit Japan in the third week of this month to attend a U.N. meeting as well as to discuss Jordanian-Japanese relations and the Middle East peace process, officials said Saturday.

The officials said Dr. Majali will attend the Dec. 13/14 meetings of the International University Council, a group under the United Nations umbrella.

Dr. Majali, whose service record includes that of the presidency of the University of Jordan, is a member of the council.

At the council meeting, Dr. Majali will seek to create a programme for Jordanian students to visit abroad and meet with world leaders with a view of expanding their horizon of understanding of international affairs and offer firsthand information on Jordan, the officials said.

Dr. Majali will use the occasion of being in Japan to meet with senior Japanese government leaders, including his counterpart Morimoto Hosokawa, the officials said.

The focus of Dr. Majali's official meetings will be Jordanian-Japanese relations and the Middle East peace process. Information Minis-



Abdul Salam Majali

ter Jawad Al Anani told the Jordan Times.

Included in the discussions will be the Japanese role in the multilateral phase of the peace process and Tokyo's active participation as chairman of the regional working group on environment.

Japan has identified environment and water projects as its contribution to the two-year-old Arab-Israeli peace process.

The working group met last in Cairo in October and one of the dozens of projects it discussed was a sharing of Red Sea pollution monitoring and data sharing among Jordan, Israel and Egypt.

A decision was taken at meeting that the three coun-

tries will share monitoring equipment as well as results of processed data with a view to taking prompt action to counter pollution in the Red Sea.

The Japanese government is expected to provide technical assistance to the project in the form of equipment and training for monitoring and data processing personnel, diplomats said.

The amount of assistance has not been specified yet, they added.

Japan, which is also a member of the regional working group on water, is financing two pilot projects near the Dead Sea to explore possibilities of desalination as a means to address part of Jordan's water problems.

Japanese-Jordanian relations are traditionally strong. The Tokyo government extended \$750 million in soft loans to Jordan in the late 1980s and early 1990s, particularly to help the Kingdom cope with the negative effects of the Gulf crisis of 1990-91.

The Japanese government is expected to make a fresh loan of \$80 million to help the Kingdom's energy sector to match a similar loan made by the World Bank.

Dr. Majali will leave Amman on Dec. 10 and is expected to be back home before Dec. 20.



Director of the University of Jordan's Centre for Strategic Studies Mustafa Hamarneh (right) and Director of the Institute of Middle East Studies at Hankuk University Jaemahn Suh Saturday address the opening session of a two-day conference on 'Jordan and Korea in Their Respective Regional Contexts'

Academics study Jordanian, Korean political, economic models

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan and Korea, having had similar recent historic and political experiences and sharing similar economic circumstances in possessing few natural resources, were able to accomplish qualitative achievements in numerous fields, especially in democracy and political reforms, that could serve as an example to other developing nations, said Mustafa Hamarneh, director of the Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS) at the University of Jordan.

In opening a two-day conference Saturday entitled "Jordan and Korea in Their Respective Regional Contexts," Dr. Hamarneh said the conference seeks to contribute to building further cooperation between the two countries through the University of Jordan and Hankuk University in Korea which jointly organised the conference with the CSS.

Current international developments justify the urgent need for a new method of thinking on the part of Third

World countries which should give more serious thought to economic planning, said Dr. Hamarneh.

Third World nations ought to strive for closer cooperation and show more solidarity at the regional and international levels, he added.

Jaemahn Suh, director of Hankuk University's Institute of Middle East Studies, presented an overview on Jordanian-Korean relations.

Professor Suh reviewed Arab-Korean relations since the 11th century, noting that Korean-Jordanian relations date back to the 1960s, before the establishment of diplomatic ties.

He referred to the bilateral agreements in economic, technological and cultural fields which he said would bolster bilateral ties.

In Saturday's first session, Sari Nasser, professor of sociology at the University of Jordan, presented a working paper dealing with the role of universities in community de-

velopment, citing the case of Jordan.

Professor Jaung Rew, considered Korea's top Arabist with teaching experience in Cairo, spoke about "regional systems and developing countries."

According to Dr. Hamarneh, topics on the meeting's agenda include several important political and economic subjects that "attempt to study each other's model without mediation, that is, academicians from both sides sitting face to face to discuss their respective experiences and thoughts."

The Korean delegation is headed by Professor Kang H. Lee, president of Hankuk University.

The 5-member delegation met earlier with University President Fawzi Gharaibeh who expressed the university's willingness to assist Hankuk University and other Korean universities in fulfilling their needs in their Arabic and other Middle East departments.

Union of voluntary societies marks international day

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — In observance of International Volunteer Day 1993, Sunday, the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) this week will implement general activities and initiate projects benefiting the needy in Jordan, according to GUVS Execu-

tive President Abdullah Al Khatib.

The GUVS Executive Board Sunday will meet in Zarqa to honour veteran members of voluntary societies for their outstanding services, Dr. Khatib told the Jordan Times Saturday.

He said that the executive board will also lay the foundation to inaugurate seven

different projects in the Zarqa governorate.

The activities to mark International Volunteer Day will extend for the entire week, during which two newly-built rehabilitation centres for the handicapped will be opened at Tafiteh and Ajloun, Dr. Khatib said.

He said each of these centres, set up by GUVS, has

cost JD 100,000 and will benefit the needy and handicapped children in the two areas.

This week will also witness the graduation of 42 volunteers who will work as liaison officers for GUVS in what Dr. Khatib called a credit finance programme benefiting income-generating projects in the Ma'an area.

In a statement issued on

the eve of International Volunteer Day, the Ministry of Social Development said that Jordan has more than 700 voluntary and charitable societies spread over the country's various governorates, and their members are estimated to total 75,000.

The ministry said that it was closely cooperating with the volunteers.

LEBANESE PRODUCTS ON DISPLAY

Minister of Industry and Trade Rima Khalaf Saturday attended the opening of a seven-day exhibition of Lebanese national products at the Philadelphia Hotel. On display are samples of garments, shoes, leather, silverware, cosmetics, embroideries and blankets made in Lebanon. The exhibition was opened by Dr. Khalaf and Lebanese Minister of State Anwar Al Khalil in the presence of Minister of State for Legal Affairs Khaled Al Zou'bi. The exhibition was organised by the Beirut Chamber of Industry and Trade in cooperation with the Lebanese Businessmen Association. The Lebanese minister arrived here earlier Saturday at the head of an economic delegation on a two-day visit to Jordan. Mr. Khalil said he would discuss promoting Jordanian-Lebanese trade and economic cooperation (Petra photo)



WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Plastic art exhibition by a number of Iraqi artists at La Casa Art Gallery (between the 5th and 6th Circles).
- ★ Exhibition of Lebanese products at Philadelphia Hotel.
- ★ Second Jordanian exhibition of cotton and woolen products at the World Exhibition Hall — University Road (11:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m.)
- ★ Exhibition of all family needs at Al Nukhbah Exhibition Hall — University Road (Tel. 837394).
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by artist Khalid Khreis at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of watercolours by artist Shaher Jirni at the Goethe Institute.

FILMS

- ★ Film entitled "Pinochio" at the American Center at 5:00 p.m. (77 minutes).
- ★ Romanian film entitled "Adela," at the Royal Cultural Centre at 7:00 p.m.

LECTURES

- ★ Lecture by Dr. Mohammad Aziz Shukri, dean of Law College at the University of Damascus entitled "The American Age...Do We Confront With It or Fight Against It?" at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 6:00 p.m.

35 teachers attend 6-day special education seminar

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Education Saturday opened a seminar to train primary school teachers in special education for handicapped children at government schools.

Participating in the six-day programme are 35 men and women teachers.

The seminar will tackle particular difficulties of handicapped children and how to design special programmes for individual students as well as groups of students.

The week-long seminar is in implementation of a 1993 law on providing special education to students with various learning disabilities according to Youssef Saleh, head of a special education unit at the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF) which is co-sponsoring the seminar with the Ministry of Education. Praising the on-going coop-

eration between the ministry and QAF, Mr. Saleh said that joint programmes were also in line with the objectives of the 1987 National Educational Conference which called for attention to be given to handicapped children at government-run schools.

Under the joint programmes, the ministry and QAF have prepared educational kits for training these children in Arabic and mathematics as an initial stage; these will be discussed and analysed during the six-day seminar.

The meeting was opened by Ministry of Education Secretary General Munther Al Musai who said that the 1987 conference had called for concentrating efforts on improving the quality of education and meeting the special needs of the handicapped. Dr. Musai thanked QAF for its cooperation.

By Dr. Fahed Al Fakak

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

Chairman of the Board of Directors:

MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:

MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:

GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

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Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 696183

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Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Blockade on Aqaba only hurts Jordan

Notwithstanding the fact that the American administration took some time before nominating its new ambassador to Jordan — an important player in Middle Eastern affairs — I believe Wesley W. Egan Jr., who assumes his post under difficult circumstances, will face up to the challenges of different sorts that characterise the climate of political change of the area.

We know very little about the new American ambassador, but we sincerely hope that he will be an ambassador of goodwill, of friendship and understanding and that he will have the capacity to respect the feelings of this Jordanian Arab people, care about its interests and aspirations and furnish his government with constructive reports that extend the bridges of cooperation not knock them down.

Perhaps the first report the new ambassador is called upon to write to the State Department is about the American blockade against Aqaba. This blockade outlived its useful justification and should be called off without further delay, not only as a new start and a signal of good intentions, but also because it is meaningless as far as the economic sanctions

against the Iraqi people are concerned. The impact of the blockade is simply to hurt Jordan and cause huge losses to the Jordanian economy with no compensation whatsoever.

The continued blockade imposed on Aqaba has only one meaning: that the American government does not trust the Jordanian government's pledge to abide by the Security Council resolutions. The assumption is that if Jordan is left alone, its government will either encourage illegal trade with Iraq or, at least, turn a blind eye, on those who violate the sanctions.

It is rather common knowledge that Jordan is practically the only state among the countries surrounding Iraq that adheres to the sanctions to the letter. The sanctions are completely ignored by the authorities in Syria, Turkey and Iran — Iraq can therefore buy anything if it can come up with the dollar to pay. No wonder that those with vested interests in Iraq left Jordan long time ago and set their businesses in Turkey.

Yet, for the sake of argument, we shall assume that the Jordanian government does not deserve to be trusted by

America, and that the Jordanian government does not do anything to prevent smuggling, and ask: in that case what is the use of blockading Aqaba if a major part of Jordanian imports comes through Lebanon, Syria or Turkey and is not subject to American inspection?

The sanction-busters do not need to be geniuses to avoid Aqaba and shift their trade to Turkish, Syrian and Lebanese ports where the American Sixth Fleet is not involved in intercepting ships and inspecting containers. Moreover, the imports to Jordan from ports other than Aqaba are tempting even on their own, even without the blockade and perhaps even more so because of imposing fines to convince importers to use Aqaba. Only legitimate imports to Jordan do suffer from the American blockade.

The new American ambassador could tell his government the simple truth: The American blockade is hurting the Jordanian economy and damaging the American image in Jordan, but has no effect whatsoever on Iraq.

Debate of purpose

TODAY is the 12th Parliament's occasion to put to test Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali's government's programme on the basis of which it may gain (or lose) the vote of confidence. The fact that the prime minister has invoked His Majesty King Hussein's Speech from the Throne, delivered at the opening of Parliament, as his political programme, does not and should not prevent deputies from scrutinising its platform. This should be done for three reasons. The Speech from the Throne was basically an enunciation of broad policy guidelines that left out much needed details. As a matter of fact, His Majesty's speech was intended to be just that: a principled presentation of the Kingdom's domestic and external policies that require amplification and elucidation. It is never the Monarch's mission to submit a detailed chart for the future. This is where parliamentarians can press the prime minister for much more detailed course of action for the upcoming years. Second, Dr. Majali and some members of Parliament may differ on the interpretation of the Speech from the Throne. Even when taken in its broadest terms, there is plenty of room for deliberation on the exact construction of words used. This is where the two branches of government can engage in a serious and faithful effort to reach exact meaning of the speech. Third, as long as scrutiny of the programme is conducted in a positive and constructive spirit, there can be no qualms about any spirited debate that could ensue. In the final analysis, what counts a lot is the way the deliberations of Parliament are conducted and whether the issues are debated by members of the society and their representatives in an objective and balanced manner.

On the other side of the coin, the Majali government, whose programme remains essentially unchanged even after the recent reshuffle, is associated with various policy decisions that Parliamentarians can take up issue with. For example, it was the Majali government that changed the law on elections and introduced the controversial one-person, one-vote criterion. Moreover, it is this prime minister that broke previous traditions, religiously observed during parliamentary life, by excluding members of the Lower House from any ministerial portfolio. There are many other internal and foreign issues on which the new government can also be examined. The field is wide open therefore to have a beneficial vote-of-confidence session even though the Speech from the Throne is the backbone of the debate.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i Saturday questioned the wisdom behind the recent Cabinet reshuffle. Those who left the Cabinet were good men and the performance of their duties was impeccable, said Tareq Masarweh. The prime minister did not reveal the reason behind the reshuffle and those who resigned their posts did not disclose the reason behind their move, said the writer. We do not have statistics about the number of the former ministers, but we hope that the government would in future obtain from resorting to shifting very efficient employees or judges from their present positions to become ministers, because their work is of vital importance, continued the writer. He said it is also hoped that the government would not resort to appointing former ministers as heads of public share-holding companies. We hope that the government would continue to abstain from giving deputies ministerial portfolios especially as long as the political parties have not yet succeeded in formulating their social, cultural, economic and political programmes which could justify their presence in a government, said the writer. He expressed hope that the new information minister would now reveal to the public the agreements which have so far been concluded with the Americans and the Israelis in Washington. With this move, the writer added, one could understand the reason behind the recent Cabinet reshuffle.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dastour commented on the vote of confidence in the present government, to be granted it by Parliament Sunday, saying that it is widely believed that the vote of confidence will be cast with a small majority. Tahir Al Udwan said many people believe that because the government does not include any parliamentarians, it would be in a poor position to get a fairly large majority vote. He said that another reason for this expected result is the recent Cabinet reshuffle which the writer described as limited and minor since it did not affect the main portfolios of the interior or foreign ministries. The reshuffle therefore seemed to be in form not in substance and could not attract the support of the large majority of deputies, he added. The writer noted that the Kingdom's economy would be scrutinised thoroughly by the deputies, especially as Jordan is entering a new phase in which the economy would be of vital importance in view of the regional changes that are taking place and are still expected to take place in the new era.

By Muhammad Ziarati

The Middle East is often described as one of the most militarised regions of the world. Within this context, a major share of defence outlay is devoted to air power by states in the region. This emphasis is either manifest in military doctrine or evident from examining the trends of military procurement.

The central position of air power in Israeli military doctrine is well known. On the other hand, some two thirds of the \$75bn or so which six Arab countries (Saudi Arabia, Libya, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt) spent on modernising their armed forces in the second half of the 1980s was devoted to air power. Despite talks about curbing the infusion of excessive and sophisticated armament into the Middle East after the Gulf war, the region's military strategic landscape has since become no less complex, as a scrutiny of the air power modernisation plans of some of the important regional players in the 1990s clearly demonstrates.

Saudi Arabia

Given its extensive land borders and small population, the Saudis tend to rely on the firepower and inherent flexibility of air power to deter aggression and defend the country's land mass.

Lessons drawn from the Gulf war have reinforced the Saudis' belief in the value of air power, not least in the need for long-range ground attack aircraft. The Gulf war has also demonstrated to the Saudis the vital role of "smart" munitions and aircraft that specialise in electronic warfare; it also seems to have heightened Saudi interest in enhanced aerial refuelling capability and additional mechanisms for better awareness and coordination of aerial operations over a large battlefield.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait had an immediate effect on the Saudi air inventory in terms of both complexity and size. In August 1990 the Saudis received 24 additional F-15 aircraft with Sidewinder and Sparrow missiles. In September of the same year, as the first part of a two-stage deal with the U.S., the Saudis received inter alia 12 AH-64 Apache attack helicopters with an assortment of anti-tank Hellfire missiles; six batteries of Patriot missile air defence systems; eight UH-60 helicopters; seven KC-135 tanker aircraft; and ten C-130H transport aircraft.

Phase II of the deal, worth approximately \$14bn, has not been ratified because of the vehemence of congressional opposition. This would have considerably enhanced Saudi military capability, including its air force, involving the sale of more combat aircraft, attack helicopters, Patriot missile batteries and A-10s.

The Saudis are concurrently concentrating on enhancing their ground attack and air-to-air capability. The systems of their choice have been the U.S. F-15 and the British Tornado. The U.S. is to supply 72 F-15 XP aircraft, a scaled down version of the F-15E fighter, with less sophisticated air-to-air missiles and avionics. The U.K. will provide 48 Tornados between 1995 and 1997. The Saudis are also likely to seek a substitute for the 160 F-5 light attack aircraft in their inventory, with the programme's cost running into billions of dollars. The Israelis are opposed to the acquisition of systems such as the F-15 E combat aircraft and Apache attack helicopters by Saudi Arabia, primarily because of their stand-off anti-armour capability.

Israel

The Gulf war has reinforced Israel's conviction in the importance of securing air superiority for winning wars, and the vital contributing role played

by "smart" munitions, electronic warfare and the need to suppress enemy air defences. The capability of allied aircraft to evade detection by enemy radar, and to conduct round-the-clock operations, is also unlikely to be lost on Israel and fits in well with its notions of swift military victories. These are some of the operational and technological parameters which could influence the Israeli procurement effort in the 1990s.

In terms of specific air threats, the Israeli planners view with apprehension Arab air forces' upgrading. But particular concern is reserved for the modernisation of the Syrian air force, which has led to its procurement of advanced aircraft such as the MiG-29 and Su-26, electronic warfare equipment, sophisticated radar and advanced surface-to-air missiles. In 1991, the Israeli army took delivery of 19 Apache helicopters from the U.S., and agreement over the supply of 24 additional Apache helicopters has been reached. Furthermore, in order to gain better tactical mobility, the Israeli military is also planning to acquire possibly as many as 130 UH-60 Black Hawk transport helicopters. The U.S. has also supplied the Israeli army with ten CH-53A cargo helicopters worth \$13.6m.

The Gulf war has also led to the acquisition of 25 additional F-15 aircraft to the Israeli air force worth approximately \$130m. Although the F-15s are dual air-to-air and air-to-ground capable, the Israelis employ them primarily as air superiority aircraft. Hostilities in the Gulf have also stimulated an increase in the sophistication of Israel's surface-to-air missile capability, with the U.S. Patriot air defence missile system. This is an area in which the Israeli capability is likely to be strengthened in the 1990s, through the introduction of the Arrow system.

Syria

Hand-outs of up to \$2bn to Hafez Al Assad's regime by the oil-rich Arab Gulf states for the stance it took in the Gulf crisis have rejuvenated Syria's attempts to attain "strategic parity" with Israel. This policy, set in motion after the 1979 Camp David agreement and accelerated after Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, to a large measure was given up by 1988 because of the cost.

The policy of "strategic parity" seeks to counterbalance perceived Israeli advantages in armour, air power and nuclear weapons, leading to massive Syrian investment to acquire tanks and anti-tank systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, air defence systems, surface-to-surface missiles and chemical weapons. Financial rewards from the Gulf have enabled Syria to revive this aim, hence its current defence spending spree.

With the notable exception of about 600 additional T-72 main battle tanks from Russia and Czechoslovakia, all Syrian acquisitions since the Gulf war have been aerial systems. It has ordered 48 MiG-29 combat aircraft, in addition to the 30 already in its possession. The MiG-29 is the closest Russian plane to the U.S. F-15 and

F-16 combat planes, and those in Syria's possession are equipped with a variety of guided air-to-air missiles which include the AA-10 Alamo with a 60-mile range. Damascus has also ordered, and apparently entered into service, 24 Su-26 bombers, which can fly at low altitudes. Syria, which possesses one of the densest air defence networks by regional standards, has also reinforced its SAM capability through the acquisition of additional SA-11 Gadfly missile batteries. Contacts have also been made with Russia for the purchase of high-altitude SA-10 SAM systems and a whole array of other sophisticated radar and command and control systems.

Although Syria has been modernising its air force since the Gulf war, one must not lose sight of the fact that most of its equipment is technologically backward. Therefore, depending on the availability of funds and the direction of its relations with Israel, it might well decide to continue with the modernisation of its air force in the 1990s.

A further development with implications for the balance of air power in the Middle East is the current Syrian effort not only to enhance its surface-to-surface missile (SSM) capability through the acquisition of systems with greater accuracy and range, but also to gain the means of manufacturing them. Syria relies on SSMs to counterbalance Israel's perceived aerial superiority. It has acquired the North Korean Scud-C and the Chinese solid-fuel M-9 missile, both of which have ranges of approximately 600km, carry higher pay-loads and are more accurate than any equivalent system in Syria's possession. Syria is now seeking Chinese and North Korean assistance for their indigenous production.

The current Syrian military modernisation is a source of much Israeli consternation. Syria's acquisition of additional high performance aircraft such as the MiG-29 means that Israel will have to devote more resources to maintain aerial superiority. Furthermore, missiles with greater range and accuracy, by enabling Syria to hit at the population centres and vital military installations such as air bases, could cause disarray and confusion in the Israeli mobilisation effort in the opening stages of any conflict. Although Israel has interpreted the current Syrian military build-up as a sign of belligerence, emphasis in this context must be laid on the objectives which the latter has pursued under the policy of "strategic parity". In peacetime, "strategic parity" is intended to enable Syria to negotiate with Israel from a position of strength. Given the current Arab-Israeli peace negotiations, the latter aim is of particular relevance.

Iran

Iran's air force is still dependent on obsolete technology. The country's fleet of F-5 and F-4 combat aircraft, under programmes set in motion in the 1970s under the Shah, were to have replaced with F-16s by the early 1990s, much in the same way that the country's surface-to-air missile systems and air defence sensors, both

ground-based and airborne, were undergoing significant expansion. The revolution brought all those programmes to a halt in 1979. General Sattari, commander-in-chief of the Iranian air force, has stated that a 15-year modernisation programme was devised for the force in 1986, with the twin aims of making its organisation and weapons systems less dependent on U.S.-made components. But it is only recently that Iran has managed to find a reliable supplier in Russia. Iran has either received or signed agreements for the purchase of MiG-27/29/31s, Su-24s, Tupolev-22 bombers and Ilushin-76 electronic surveillance aircraft. Apart from aircraft, agreements for the purchase of SA-5 Gammon (fixed-site, high-altitude capable), SA-121 Gadfly and SA-134 Gopher surface-to-air missiles have also reportedly been made with Russia.

Egypt

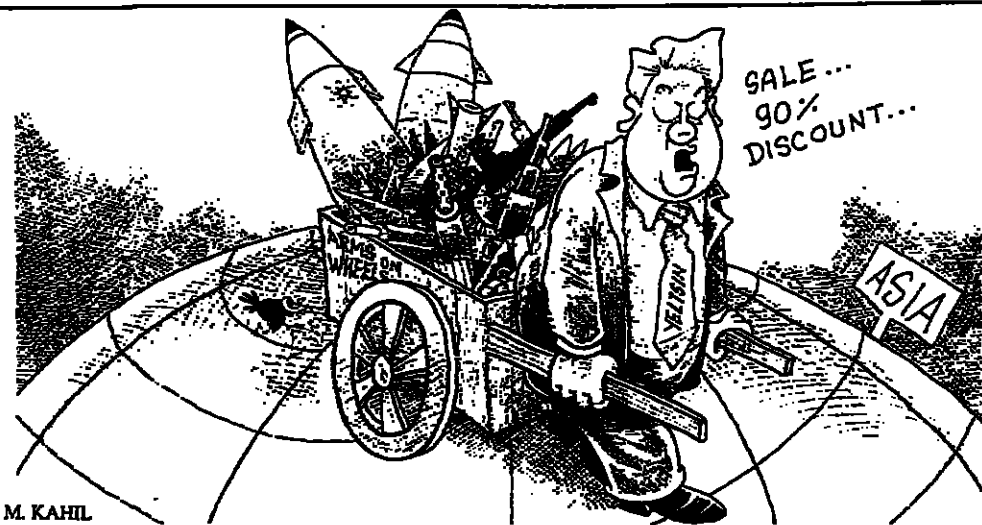
Egypt has been engaged in modernising its air force and air defence capability since the 1980s, replacing its Soviet-dominated inventory with western equipment. This is a process which appears to be continuing in the 1990s.

In 1991, Egypt purchased about \$2.3bn worth of military equipment from the U.S., with the lion's share of it devoted to the improvement of the country's aerial strength. Under a \$1.6bn package the country purchased 46 additional Turkish-assembled F-16 C/D combat aircraft, the delivery of which will be completed by 1994. The package also included the supply of spare parts and related ordnance, such as Maverick air-to-ground missiles.

Egypt is also implementing programmes to improve its air defence capability. Defence Minister Tantawi has indicated that the country's air defences have improved immensely since the Gulf war. In 1991, for instance, it spent \$146m on modification kits for 12 Hawk air defence missile systems and an additional \$70m on logistics support.

A cornerstone of the current air defence modernisation programme is the development of an automated command and control system with U.S. assistance, known as Programme 776, which should become operational this year or next. Few technical details have been released about the programme, but it is known that, under it, everything from surface-to-air missiles to anti-aircraft artillery radars, including airborne data from Grumman E-2C Hawkeye aircraft, would be tied into a single network.

In conclusion, the programme being planned or implemented in the Middle East will ensure that the region will remain saturated with some of the most technologically advanced equipment. The willingness of Middle East states to pay in cash, combined with some genuine security worries, and the interest of foreign arms manufacturers to sell abroad, not least due to a shrinking domestic demand, would undoubtedly accentuate the tendency towards the proliferation of hi-tech air power in the region in the 1990s — Middle East International.



M. KAHIL

China leaves room to manoeuvre on Hong Kong row

By Andrew Quinn
Reuters

BEIJING — China's denunciations of Governor Chris Patten's plan to push political reform in Hong Kong ring with anger, but diplomats said on Friday Beijing has not boxed itself in as 1997 approaches.

Mr. Patten slammed the ball down China's throat on Thursday by announcing he would submit a partial package of his electoral reforms to the colony's Legislative Council on Dec. 15 despite lack of agreement with Beijing.

Chinese officials were quick to sputter foul, but diplomats say Beijing now seems to be weighing its next response: slam the political ball back, give it a graceful lob or simply walk away from the game.

"I don't think the Chinese know quite what to do next," one western diplomat said. "They are all expressing righteous indignation, but it is muted righteous indignation. They are still thinking."

The first indications from Beijing did not look promising for Sino-British cooperation in the run-up to July 1997, when China resumes sovereignty over Hong Kong's six million people.

Proclaiming the seven-month effort to reach an acceptable compromise all but over, Chinese officials squared their shoulders and let loose at London.

Lu Ping, head of the cabinet's office of Hong Kong

and Macau affairs, lectured reporters at length late on Thursday, saying Mr. Patten's move had exposed Britain's utter untrustworthiness as a negotiating partner.

Saying Mr. Patten's proposal for another round of talks "was merely a pretense and the play of tricks," Mr. Lu said London had never wanted the negotiations to succeed and had deliberately set out to sabotage them.

"We shall not be taken in," Mr. Lu was quoted as saying by the official Xinhua News Agency.

Foreign ministry spokesman Wu Jianmin echoed Mr. Lu's disgust and hinted darkly that the wider range of Sino-British ties, including trade, would be affected by the collapse of negotiations.

A spokesman for China's de facto consulate in Hong Kong, the local branch of the Xinhua News Agency, said Mr. Patten's move had violated "an important political principle" and represented a very serious step to undermine cooperation.

Despite the predictable expressions of rage, diplomats said China's response to Mr. Patten has been heavy on implied threats but light on actual content.

The real counter-punch may come — if at all — when Mr. Patten actually presents his partial reform bill to the legislature, they said.

LETTERS

Red tape hampers research

To the Editor

I am a Jordanian Ph.D. candidate at the London School of Economics. I have been in Amman for the past 10 months in order to conduct field research for the dissertation entitled "The Determinants of Female Labour Force Participation: The Case of Single Women Workers in Amman, Jordan." I am writing in order to convey my three months' experience in trying to obtain a "permission" to be able to conduct a survey that will include 300 households in the city of Amman.

My research methodology, as approved by my supervisors, was that it would be based on the Department of Statistics' 1991 Employment, Unemployment and Poverty Survey. The first part is a statistical review of the findings concerning my target group and the second is a sub-sample from the original survey where I would be able to revisit households interviewed in 1991. Initially this was approved by the research department at the Department of Statistics.

After obtaining and analysing the raw data of the above-mentioned survey, I needed to obtain the sub-sample. At this point, there were several time-consuming requirements that I had to fulfill but which I willingly conceded to given the fact that it is the policy of the Department of Statistics to protect personal information of those families interviewed in their surveys.

Subsequently, I was supposed to obtain a permission from the Ministry of Interior for a security clearance. It was at this point that I began encountering the difficulties which I would like to convey. The ministry sent my application to the General Intelligence, the Military Intelligence and the Public Security which in its turn sent it to the Criminal Investigations Department and the Preventive Security Department. It was beyond any of my expectations to be summoned to the Criminal Investigations Department to justify my research. Furthermore, all four of my research assistants had to go through similar circumstances, encountering in the process complex and time-consuming difficulties.

Due to these complications I am already delayed from my scheduled return to my university. I have been advised time and again by friends and family who saw my frustration to forget this scientific and random method and look for an alternative, but I have persevered due to my personal commitment to conduct my work in accordance with scientific research methodology.

The Ministry of Interior may be justified in having records on researchers. I was convinced that having an official permission was also for my own good and I did not consider bypassing it. However, there needs to be a standard procedure in dealing with cases like mine instead of going in circles for months from one department to the next and being subjected to outright harassment both as a researcher and as a woman.

Mary Kawar,
Amman.

Handwritten signature in Arabic script.

Women have a vital role in enabling the family to function

Following is the address delivered by Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Al Hassan in Malta at the World NGO Forum, launching the International Year of the Family, on Nov. 30, 1993:

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to be asked to deliver a keynote address at the World NGO Forum, launching the International Year of the Family. I hope, in the few minutes available to me, to contribute to your debate by putting forward some thoughts on the future of the family, focusing on the role of women, and looking in particular at the Muslim World.

The family is a ubiquitous institution. Across the world and throughout history, it has been the basic unit of society. It has taken a wide variety of forms — from extended clan structures to the single-parent family — while the roles and functions it performs in different societies are equally diverse. It has proved to be a flexible entity, capable of responding and adapting to the ever-changing demands of circumstances. Indeed, in spite of the many social upheavals that have affected its character, it continues to provide the only natural framework for moral and material support. Clearly a family's support system is particularly essential to children, the elderly and the disabled, but actually, it is vital to the health and growth of all human beings, and consequently to the well-being and successful development of society as a whole. Indeed, so complex and so delicate are the functions of the family that the philosopher Montaigne was moved to observe: "There is scarcely a less bother in the running of a family, than in that of an entire state." But I would like to add — it is the most worthwhile bother.

If the family is the basis of society, what is the basis of the family? I would like to argue that it is women: it is they who play the central role enabling the family to function — indeed, to continue to exist. And it is therefore necessary to concentrate on women when considering the status and future of the family as a social unit. This is not to deny our wish, that men be encouraged to assume their full responsibilities within the family, but only to accept that for the time being, in the great majority of communities the world over, women will have to be the main focus of any efforts to

support and protect the family. Again, this is not to set aside any long-term agenda for positive change and development, but merely to acknowledge and work within a set of existing circumstances.

Given these realities, women must then be the main recipients of the support directed to the family. Whether they elect to be homeworkers to the exclusion of all else, or whether they assume a dual responsibility in the home and workplace, this support will help ensure that

implement appropriate educational and legislative strategies, we should neither neglect nor undermine the values that certain communities and societies attach to motherhood and the family, stemming from their religious and cultural heritage, or from unique social considerations.

Solutions must therefore be tailored to specific needs in this field as in all others. How often have we seen the failure of systems that are imported wholesale without regard to the particulars of culture and

rights of women are sacred, see that women are maintained in the rights assigned to them". For instance, Muslim women are empowered, by contract, to stipulate their marriage condition. Unfortunately, they are rarely aware that they are entitled to do so, although this knowledge is crucial to their entering into the state of matrimony with all its inherent responsibilities, with the best chance of success.

The gap between theory and practice is significant also when considering how to achieve a balance between the demands of traditional families and the aspirations of the younger generations. This is one of the most complex issues facing the Arab family today. The winds of change blow, even in societies that are most conducive to family health and well-being. Economic, social and demographic processes have combined to diminish the ability of families to meet the needs of their members and their functions within society as a whole. The key to tackling this dangerous worldwide trend lies not only in the education of women, but in the guarantee of equal rights for women and especially political rights. It is vital that women give their input on legislation affecting their own status and role. Full participation in legislative affairs is crucial for the education and development of women and, in turn, the well-

grate under the pressures of modernisation and the call for a greater role for women within the workforce. Of course, women in these societies that seek and find employment outside the home must be given sufficient support to ensure that the responsibilities they assume do not adversely affect the health and well-being of their families. I am thinking here of a variety of legal provisions, such as a minimum but compassionate maternity leave, and a sufficiency of crèches and nurseries in workplaces, which would allow a parent to continue with both a career and functioning as a responsible family member. But at the same time, society as a whole should not look askance at women who take the informed and educated decision to devote themselves to the care of their family and home. Rather, the objective must be to provide all women with the necessary help to make their particular choice a success.

This raises the question of the relationship between the family and the state. In many so-called developed societies, the state is rapidly taking over functions traditionally associated with the family. Fragmentation of families, and the rise of secularism, has given some commentators justifiable cause for alarm. The developing world does not yet face this latest turning point in human

In those societies that may have become less supportive of the family as a basic unit, efforts should be made to enhance the image of the mother as homemaker. This would help to reverse the negative connotations that have been attached to women who choose not to work outside their homes, and mitigate the adverse impact of modernisation on the functioning of the family and the values traditionally associated with it. A search for cultural, religious, social and practical justifications for the sup-

average for our region. The Jordanian success story is well-known and at its heart lies no miracle, but a simple formula derived from basic principles, that being the concept of equality between males and females as regards compulsory schooling, allied to the provision not only of free education, but in a variety of forms to suit the social, cultural and religious sensitivities of a varied population. Thus parents of both boys and girls were empowered to choose the style and manner of education that was

This belief can lead to difficult decisions when attempting to formulate long-term plans on issues that go beyond the individual, or even beyond a country or a region, but are properly the concern of all mankind. The prevalence of drugs, disease and famine, the control of population growth and the maintenance of the environment are powerful examples of such trans-national concerns. However, even when dealing with problems of this scale, a focus on the family can be of value.

For the keys to population growth control and environmental stability lie in sustainable development. And again the path to this lies in education, health and the improvement of economic conditions: objectives which can be tackled through the conduct of the family. Family planning, for example, can help break the cycle of poverty. Likewise, drug abuse can ultimately be dealt with only by addressing the users; and here, the support of the family will always be necessary. And I have already shown how investment in the education of women can help control the spread of diseases and promote family health. In all of these areas, there are occasional hopeful signs that the world is increasingly willing to invest in human resource development, rather than in the false security that is bought by military spending. The cycle of unemployment, poverty, population growth and environmental degradation can be broken; but only if a fundamental rethink of priorities is carried out unilaterally across the world. A vital part of this task must be the promotion of the inherent strengths of families. It is through the family that the generations of the future will learn their values and their norms. For in the words of the poet John Milton: "The childhood shows the man as morning shows the day."

Ladies and gentlemen,

From my short stay in Malta, I can see how entirely appropriate it is that the World NGO Forum has chosen this island nation in which to launch the International Year of the Family — for the family is at the heart and soul of the Maltese people. It is their most effective shield against the encroachment of so many ills. I wish the government of Malta every success in their endeavours — as I do wish all of you who are participating in this vital conference.

"As a cardinal principle, I would like to make it clear that I am for people — in this case, women — making their own choices and decisions on the issues that touch their lives. A woman should always be free to choose her path in life, whatever that may be. But it should be an informed and freely taken choice, one which, in the spirit of democracy, reflects her personal aspirations, desires and needs. As such, I believe that education is the key to women's success in making the right choices."

women can meet the needs and expectations with which they are almost solely entrusted. I would like now to examine some of the ways in which women can be aided in this endeavour.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As a cardinal principle, I would like to make it clear that I am for people — in this case, women — making their own choices and decisions on the issues that touch their lives. A woman should always be free to choose her path in life, whatever that may be. But it should be an informed and freely taken choice, one which, in the spirit of democracy, reflects her personal aspirations, desires and needs. As such, I believe that education is the key to women's success in making the right choices.

Having made this point — and I imagine that few here would take issue with it — it would then seem self-evident that women must be supported in choosing whether they will have a family, when they will have it, and how many children it will comprise. For every child should be a wanted child; and after childbirth, women should continue to receive assistance, whether they choose solely to be homemakers or also to take on the challenges of a career outside their home. Only a sustained effort through education and legislation can bring about the realisation of this objective.

In seeking to formulate and

its sensibilities? It is vital to build upon existing structures, to encourage a process of nurtured evolution, rather than an engineered revolution.

Firm foundations for the family as a central social structure exist in most cultures. In the Arab Islamic tradition, motherhood and family are sacred. The Prophet Mohammed said: "The best of you before God and His creation are those who are best to their own families." Arabian society at the time of the Prophet revolved around the linked concepts of the family and the tribe. The complex social networks of the culture are reflected and built upon in the theology of Islam. Its scripture, the Holy Koran, deals at some length with family-related issues, such as the status of widows and orphans, and provides detailed instructions on questions of marriage, inheritance, and the relationship between members of a family. Indeed, the Holy Koran addresses these family-related issues at greater length than any other earthly matter, indicating the primacy which they enjoy in Islamic culture.

There is, of course, a difference between the ideal and the actual. While Islam makes numerous provisions for the protection of women's rights, few of these are generally known, and consequently even fewer are practised, despite the injunction of the Prophet Mohammed who said: "The

"When dealing with a society which has a firm religious basis, such as exists in the Islamic nations, it is vital that existing values be built upon, and not be allowed to disintegrate under the pressures of modernisation and the call for a greater role for women within the workforce. Of course, women in these societies that seek and find employment outside the home must be given sufficient support to ensure that the responsibilities they assume do not adversely affect the health and well-being of their families."

ture of the family and the wider society. Laws are a powerful tool and the legal reference they provide for women sets the tone if not the pace for social change. For laws, by their nature as publicly accessible rules, form and limit the way in which ordinary people view the family and their role within it.

When dealing with a society which has a firm religious basis, such as exists in the Islamic nations, it is vital that existing values be built upon, and not be allowed to disinte-

relations, but it is well worth considering in advance how best to continue this drift. The state can play a valuable auxiliary role, for example through the medium of social security: for a family that has limited resources cannot be expected to cope with the "additional financial burden of caring for its elderly or infirm members. However, we should not seek to replace family functions by institutionalising their support mechanisms. We should merely enable families to cope with the challenges of a contemporary life style.

port of the multi-faceted role of women must be attempted.

I am well aware that some of these recommendations may appear to go against the grain of modernity as it is often presented. But modernity should not mean the end of choice. The feminist enterprise, in East and West alike, has opened the way for women to make choices regarding their lifestyles and goals. The object of feminism has throughout been to empower women to make their own decisions and to provide a full range of opportunities for them, barring none. Those opportunities must include family-centred occupation, just as they must include the full range of possibilities in the workplace.

In this endeavour, the role of education continues to be crucial, and no efforts will succeed without it. It is possible, through national curricula, to enhance the standing of women and the family, by promoting the positive values that a balanced society must attach to both. But how can this kind of change be brought about in practice?

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like here to draw upon the experience of my own country, Jordan. Lacking in many resources, Jordan has nevertheless succeeded in providing its population with educational facilities far above the

most appropriate in the circumstances, whilst being legally obliged to ensure that their children were somehow educated within the framework of the compulsory cycle.

Through education, the status and role of women in Jordan has been elevated to meet the demands and challenges of the changing times. Indeed, we recently witnessed the election of our first female member of Parliament. Our focus on education has also laid the ground for improvements in other areas, such as health care. Obviously children brought up by an educated mother with a concern for her family's physical and emotional health will ultimately seek in their turn to rear happy and healthy families.

However, it is not sufficient just to provide a minimum level of schooling: women must subsequently be allowed and encouraged to use their education where ever they choose. In Jordan, employment opportunities, terms and conditions were by law made equal. We have sought a balance between the demands of development and the traditional values of our society, believing that an educated population is best able to make its own decisions. The state can provide material support, particularly with infrastructure, but it must not seek to determine or regulate the lives of its citizens.

Draft accord key topic

(Continued from page 1)

In comments carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Dr. Majali said that such coordination was important, especially that the Palestinian-Israeli accord is entering its implementation stage. "President Arafat's visit to Jordan will no doubt provide a good opportunity to lay the foundation for the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship during the upcoming Palestinian transitional period," Dr. Majali told Petra.

Under the Sept. 13 accord, Israel is expected to begin a four-month military withdrawal from the occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho on Dec. 13, but doubts have been cast whether this deadline could be met since the Israel-PLO negotiations on implementation of the accord have run into snags.

"We have been informed that Mr. Arafat wants to sign the accord, and we hope the document will indeed be signed during his visit this week," said a senior official.

The official noted that Jordan and Israel had signed a memorandum of understanding on reopening of Jordanian commercial banks in the occupied West Bank under Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) supervision and control.

The actual implementation of the memorandum, which the Cabinet reviewed Saturday, largely depends on coordination with the PLO through the envisaged protocol on economic cooperation. The official said Jordan and Israel would have to negotiate another memo of understanding to allow Jordanian banks to open branches in the Gaza Strip since, in principle, Jordan did not have direct control of banking in the strip prior to 1967.

All banks in the Gaza Strip were guided and supervised by Egypt, which controlled the area until Israel occupied it in the 1967 war, and Egyptian banking rules were the only regulations applicable to the banks regardless of their

ownership.

The Jordan-PLO draft accord refers to the occupied territories in their entirety without distinguishing between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, officials said.

The memorandum of understanding reached with Israel "refers to the Gaza Strip, but legally we need to negotiate a separate accord," said the senior official. "But we don't expect any major problems; an agreement could be reached soon."

According to an official quoted by Reuters, the memo of understanding provides for the conversion of all foreign currency entering the occupied territories to be converted into Jordanian dinars, not Israeli shekels as Israel had insisted in the negotiations that led to the accord.

The official was quoted as saying that the accord gives CBJ total responsibility for inspection and control of all branches of Jordanian commercial banks closed in 1967 and control of credit.

"Israel will have a very small role," the official told the agency. "It will mainly receive regular reports from these banks on their operations, exactly like the reports of foreign banks operating in Jordan routinely send to Jordan's Central Bank."



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Settlers hit Hebron again

(Continued from page 1)

jured, Palestinians said.

Hebron is the only town in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip where Jews have settled in the middle of a Palestinian population.

The PLO Executive Committee condemned the rampage by Jewish settlers in the occupied territories and said it had "decided measures which guarantee the safety of our people..."

Hanan Ashrawi, spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation at the Middle East peace talks, urged Israel to stop the settler attacks which she said undermined the

autonomy accord.

Dr. Ashrawi said the settlers' latest attacks in Hebron were "extremely serious and worrying."

"The settlers' aggression undermines the accord," Dr. Ashrawi said.

"We appeal to the Israeli government to end the settlers' actions and fulfil its responsibilities," she added.

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Christopher ready to help if asked

(Continued from page 1)

tinuing direct dialogue with Mr. Assad and a U.S. official accompanying Mr. Christopher suggested a Clinton-Assad meeting could be under consideration.

Mr. Israel television said Mr. Christopher would convey a message from Mr. Clinton to

Mr. Assad and his response could result in a meeting.

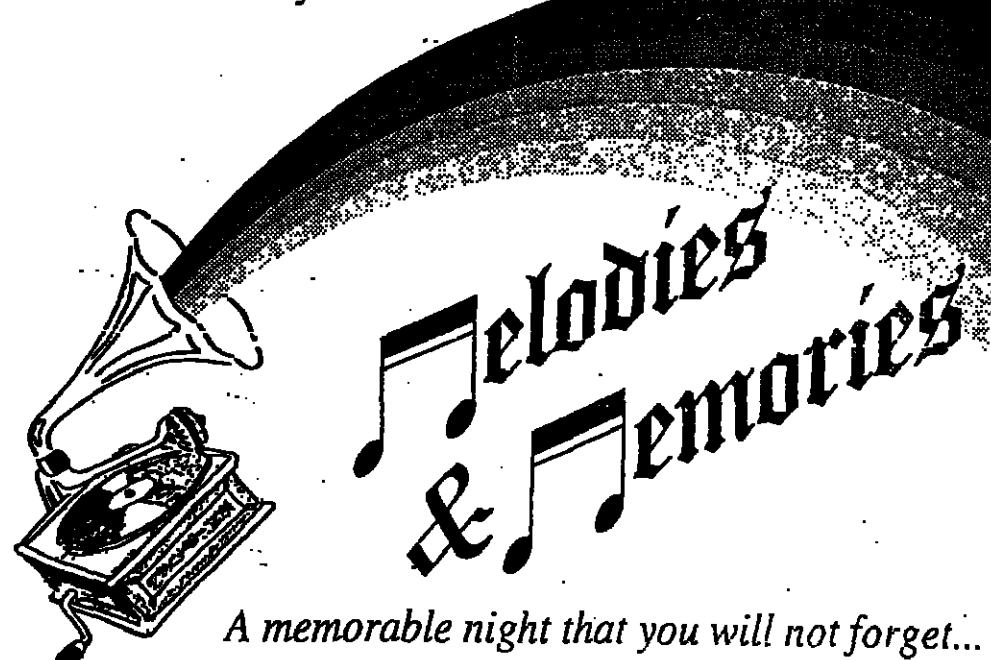
Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Israel will not withdraw from all of the Golan Heights but might return part of the strategic plateau to Syria.

Mr. Peres made the statement before a meeting scheduled on Sunday with Mr. Christopher.

"We have announced that... we do not rule out the principle of withdrawal," Mr. Peres told Israel Television, "although we did not say from all the Golan."

Mr. Christopher arrived in Israel on Friday and is expected to fly to Damascus after meetings on Saturday and Sunday.

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Fog brings respite for Sarajevo

SARAJEVO (R) — Fog brought a respite from sniper and shelling attacks in Sarajevo Saturday as Muslim and Serb political leaders prepared to try to build on the limited progress made at Geneva peace talks.

At least four civilians were killed and 16 wounded in the besieged Bosnian capital Friday but the weather closed in and halted the violence Saturday.

Muslim and Serb negotiators are due to meet again next week to discuss ways of ending the 20-month civil war, though they still appear to be far from a settlement.

Bosnia's Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic returned from the talks in Geneva with this Bosnian Serb and Croat "fives saying "we did not achieve very much... (but) it doesn't mean that nothing has been achieved."

He denied he was prepared to accept splitting up Sarajevo with Bosnian Serbs. "We do not have the intention nor shall we ever divide Sarajevo," Mr. Izetbegovic said.

"No matter what the final outcome, we will not withdraw from any parts of the town that we are now holding. I would like both our citizens and our fighters to hear that."

The "delicate issue" of Sarajevo will continue to be a major topic of discussion.

The Bosnian Serbs told reporters in Geneva they had discussed several options for dividing the city and trading territory in eastern Bosnia for land around Sarajevo.

Mr. Izetbegovic said the

Serbs proposed a "parallel city" that would include the districts of Hadzici and Pale, which are now held by Serbs. They had also proposed trading two Serb suburbs of Sarajevo for Muslim pockets in the east.

In Sarajevo Friday, two people were killed and two were wounded when a shell landed near a makeshift emergency clinic next to the city's main bakery. Reuters journalists reported.

Witnesses said the victims, a 50-year-old man and a 35-year-old woman, died when the shell hit as they left the clinic. Two people nearby were slightly injured.

Earlier Friday, a shell hit the Princip Bridge in central Sarajevo, killing two people and wounding eight, according to staff at the city's main Kosevo Hospital.

The hospital also said six people were wounded when a shell landed in the centre of the old town early in the morning.

Sarajevo, which sits in a valley, has been in the grip of a Bosnian Serb siege for the duration of the war.

The Yugoslav News Agency, Tanjug said Muslim forces fired small arms and mortars on Serb positions Friday, including the Sarajevo suburb of Vozvoca. Both sides reported artillery and mortar attacks in the city suburbs.

In the United States, an international team of investigators said it had gathered the first hard forensic evidence of mass executions in the civil war in former Yugoslavia.

The team, led by Boston-

based Physicians for Human Rights, collected the evidence — including human remains, clothing, boots and AK-47 bullet casings — from mass graves near the town of Vukovar in a Serb-held enclave of Croatia.

Similar evidence was uncovered from a suspected mass grave in an area of Croatia known by the U.N. as Sector West.

The evidence will be submitted to the recently established United Nations war crimes tribunal in the Hague.

The schoolchildren of war-torn Sarajevo went on an enforced winter break Friday, sent home for more than two months in the face of the authorities' inability to heat the schools during the cold months.

The Education Ministry, citing the cold and the security situation, said the schools would close until Feb. 15, although classes will be held in apartment blocks where possible, to make sure the children do not fall too far behind with their work.

Bosnian government radio will also broadcast classes, with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

There is not much electricity in the town and priority goes to the hospitals get what little there is.

Meanwhile, Serbian Foreign Minister Vukoslav Jovanovic accused Turkey Friday of stirring up religious sentiment among Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina from the start of the conflict in former Yugoslavia.

Religion was not an issue.

But Turkey took the chance to speed up the indoctrination of our Muslims," Mr. Jovanovic told a news conference.

He said Serbia was not involved in the conflict in Bosnia and said thousands of "mujahadeen" fighters from other Muslim countries were taking part, mainly against Croats.

"What's going on there is a civil war and not an aggression from Yugoslavia as everyone wants to believe. The war is not carried out by Serbs," he said.

Mr. Jovanovic was speaking at the end of a two-day visit to Cyprus. The Mediterranean island, whose Greek Cypriot population shares with the Serbs its Christian Orthodox faith, has been divided since a 1974 Turkish invasion of the north of the island which led to the creation of a Turkish Cypriot enclave.

He said an estimated 10,000 Mujahadeen were fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"I'm not saying they are sent by the Turkish government but none the less, they are a very strong force," he added.

Mr. Jovanovic also hit out at U.N. sanctions on the rump Yugoslav states of Serbia and Montenegro.

"U.N.-imposed sanctions on Yugoslavia gravely affect our economy and innocent people. They are inhuman and instead of bringing stability they achieve just the opposite," he added.

He also dismissed foreign press reports that Cyprus, host to an estimated 500 offshore Yugoslav companies, is used by Serbia to bust U.N. sanctions.

Malaysia says ties worsened by Keating's letter

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — Malaysia said Saturday Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating's attempt to mend fences with Malaysia's Mahathir Mohamad with a letter had worsened the diplomatic row and warned that "anything can happen after this."

The letter sent by Mr. Keating to Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad was not a letter coming from a person with any regret or regret over what had happened... Malaysian Foreign Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi told a news conference.

"What most disappointed us was that he did not say he was sorry in the letter and in fact showed no conciliatory attitude," he said.

"If this is the attitude of Keating as head of the Australian government, how then can the government and people of Malaysia believe that Australia really wants to maintain a good relationship with Malaysia."

"From now on, our relationship with Australia will de-

teriorate," he said, reading a statement that was to be sent to the Australian High Commission (embassy).

The Malaysian cabinet will decide on the next course of action to take when it meets Wednesday if Canberra does not take steps to mend the rift, he said.

"If they want to improve relations, it is better that they do something about it," he said. "Obviously, the letter from Mr. Keating is not going to help."

Asked what Malaysia was likely to do, he replied: "Anything can happen after this." Kuala Lumpur had already decided government agencies were free to review ties with Australia.

"We are not officially downgrading (ties), but the effect is that the cooperation which now exists between Malaysia and Australia in areas involving various government agencies and departments will be reviewed," he said. "This certainly will have an adverse

effect on the existing relations."

Malaysia's Information Ministry has already ordered a boycott of Australian television programmes, while others have said they would review business deals with Australian companies.

Mr. Mahathir said Friday he did not expect an apology but was dismayed by what Mr. Keating had written.

"I don't expect an apology (but) I just cannot define this letter as being conciliatory," he said.

The full content of Mr. Keating's letter has not been released by Malaysian officials said Kuala Lumpur was upset Mr. Keating had tried to justify his remark that Mr. Mahathir was a racist by referring to the Malaysian's views on the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

The letter said the term "racist" was not meant to offend and had been blown out of proportion, a Keating spokesman said Thursday.

"Apparently, he took offence with my comments that APEC has become too massive," Mr. Mahathir said. Australia was an early advocate of APEC.

Mr. Mahathir stayed away from the summit called by U.S. President Bill Clinton as he felt Washington was trying to dominate the grouping. He is also promoting an Asian-only economic group towards which Washington has been cool.

Mr. Abdullah Ahmad said it was Kuala Lumpur which suggested to the Australian High Commissioner John Dauth that Mr. Keating write a letter to Mr. Mahathir to clear the air.

"We had sincerely hoped that a letter from Keating would help us achieve what we wanted, but unfortunately the letter had the reverse effect," he said.

Mr. Keating has also postponed plans to visit Kuala Lumpur in January but Mr. Abdullah Ahmad said that decision was made before the row broke out.

Poll shows Diana is most popular royal

LONDON (Agencies) — On the day that Princess Diana decided to retreat from the public spotlight, an opinion poll showed she is the most popular member of the British royal family.

In Friday's Gallup poll, 24 per cent of those questioned picked Princess Diana compared to just six per cent for her estranged husband and heir to the throne Prince Charles.

The 93-year-old Queen Mother came second with 19 per cent of the vote and Queen Elizabeth herself third with 17 per cent.

The wide-ranging poll conducted before Princess Diana's announcement showed that popularity for the monarchy had plummeted in Britain, with just 14 per cent saying they had a great deal of affection for the royal family.

Cutting down drastically on her public engagements, Princess Diana, the world's most photographed woman, indicated that media intrusion had finally proved too much to bear.

The poll showed that 86 per cent of those questioned thought the media intruded far too much in the private lives of the royal family.

A majority of those questioned — 57 per cent — said Princess Diana should have custody of Princes William and Harry should she and Prince Charles ever divorce.

Meanwhile British politicians expressed understanding Saturday after Princess Diana announced she was cutting back public appearances, as speculation intensified about why she left the media glare.

British Prime Minister John Major was among those to express "comprehension" after Princess Diana made her announcement Friday.

"I understand and sympathise with the reasons of her decision," Mr. Major said in Dublin after talks on Northern Ireland with his Irish counter-



Princess Diana makes her announcement Friday (AFP photo)

part Albert Reynolds.

Several charities involved with the princess Saturday praised her "wonderful work" and hoped that she would continue to be available for charity appearances.

Amid the speculation about "did she jump or was she pushed," one Conservative politician pointed to the rivalry for public affection between the princess and her estranged husband, Prince Charles.

"She is not moving out of public life. She is being pushed out of public life by the bureaucracy who go under the name of courtiers," said Sir Nicholas Fairbairn, Fellow MP Terry Dicks

noted that Princess Diana's announcement came 10 days after Prince Charles said that he hoped to take on a role of trade ambassador for Britain.

The Daily Star, saying it was "rubbish" to blame media pressure for the princess's move, explained that she had "simply lost the war with the big guns at the (Buckingham) Palace," who were angry because she had stolen the limelight.

The conservative Daily Express was more critical of the princess, pointing out that she had not hesitated to use the press in the past "to pursue her differences with her husband, to court public sympathy for

herself and reduce it for him." But the Times said that the princess's decision should "counteract the impression that she and her estranged husband are competing for the favour of the public."

The Daily Mirror, in an attempt to make amends for recently publishing controversial pictures of the princess exercising at a private gym, vowed to respect her privacy in future, urging the rest of the media to follow suit.

"There must today be genuine remorse for the distress all that has caused her. Certainly there is at the Mirror," the centre-left publication said.

The paper accepted a share of the blame for pushing Princess Diana out of public life but pointed to its tabloid rival the Sun, which had published the full text of private telephone conversations and used photos of the princess in a bikini when pregnant.

The right-wing Sun claimed the illicit "leaked photos" had proved "the last straw" for the princess, but added: "Clearly other factors have helped push Diana to the brink."

The centre-right Daily Mail whose front-page headline read: "Charles drove her to it," said "her role in shaping perceptions of the modern monarchy cannot be overstated."

It also suggested the gymnasium photographs "may have been the last straw."

The right-wing Daily Telegraph leader coupled sympathy for the princess with regret that her announcement would "unleash a new royal melodrama." It foresaw an "inevitable" formalising of the royal separation.

In an emotional speech, the estranged wife of Prince Charles told a charity luncheon Friday she could no longer cope with life under the spotlight and would curtail her public activities from the end of the year.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Astronauts grab space telescope

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (R) — A Swiss astronaut used shuttle Endeavour's robot arm to snatch the defective Hubble space telescope from orbit early Saturday, the start of a grueling, five-day repair job on the \$3 billion observatory. European Space Agency astronaut Claude Nicollier used the arm to grab the telescope at 3:48 a.m. EST (0848 GMT), 365 miles (587 kilometres) above Earth. He then gently set the 432-foot-long (13-metre) telescope on its end in the shuttle's open cargo bay, where four of his crewmates will attempt to correct Hubble's blurry vision and jitters in a record series of spacewalks beginning Sunday. "Houston, Endeavour has a firm handshake with Mr. Hubble's telescope," Commander Dick Covey informed mission control. "We copy that, Covey and there are smiles galore down here," shuttle communicator Susan Helms radioed back. "It's quite a sight," Covey said.

N. Ireland peace prospects 'dim'

DUBLIN (R) — Prospects for peace in Northern Ireland by Christmas appear to have dimmed after Britain and Ireland failed to overcome "roadblocks" on the way to a settlement. Irish and British leaders met Friday and said the two sides had to narrow significant differences to capitalise on what they have both called the best chance of peace in the province for years. "We never expected the road to be easy. We expected roadblocks in the way," Ireland's Albert Reynolds told a news conference after seven hours of "very frank, very serious talks" with British Prime Minister John Major. The two men met again in a week at the European Community summit in Brussels for a second "working session" which they hope can be crowned with an agreement at a third round this month that might end 25 years of conflict. Neither was keen to set a deadline but Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring said: "I would like to think it should be done by this year, the year's end." "Let's remain optimistic. There's a lot of work to be done but I think both governments are determined to do that work and keep northern Ireland and resolving this conflict a priority."

China threatens Hong Kong plan

HONG KONG (AFP) — The Chinese government sought a "right of veto" over Hong Kong affairs in recent talks with Britain in contravention of a bilateral agreement on the territory's future, a Hong Kong government spokesman said Saturday. Earlier, in a statement, the Hong Kong government accused China of seeking to erode the territory's future autonomy and of failing to give a "full and frank account" of Sino-British talks on its future. The comments were in reaction to China's remarks Friday that it would not accept unilaterally introduced electoral reforms in the British colony, and would set up its own government there after it resumes sovereignty in 1997. The Hong Kong government spokesman said that China had offered to agree to certain less contentious issues "in exchange for the right of veto over electoral arrangements after 1997." This he said would leave the nominal administration, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) government, to decide only the number of seats to be contested.

Malawi parties call for new rule

BLANTYRE, Malawi (R) — Malawi's political parties called on the ruling presidential council to resign after fighting between the army and paramilitary youths and looting in the capital. Government officials said Saturday the death toll from Friday's fighting was 14, with 78 wounded. Witnesses reported seeing at least 16 bodies. Witnesses said several buildings in Lilongwe were still smouldering Saturday, 24 hours after the three-man ruling council ordered the army to disarm the Malawi Young Pioneers, the paramilitary wing of the ruling Malawi Congress Party (MCP). The city was calm but tense, they said. An official at the Kamuzu Central Hospital in Lilongwe, Malawi's "Garden City," said the dead and wounded were mostly Pioneers but included civilians and soldiers.

Sukarno's daughter defies pressure

SURABAYA, Indonesia (R) — The daughter of Indonesia's late President Sukarno, vying for leadership of one of the country's two permitted opposition parties, boosted her chances of success Saturday despite government support for a rival candidate. In a crucial decision that party sources said would help Megawati Sukarnoputri's campaign, the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) voted not to decide the leadership by committee. "It (a rule requiring a committee decision) has been revoked from the procedures," Budi Hardjono, Ms. Megawati's chief rival, told reporters at the PDI congress in the East Javanese port city of Surabaya. Party officials had said Ms. Megawati only stood a chance of success through a party vote, not through a committee which, if set up, was expected to have been made up of pro-government figures opposed to her election. But some party sources said Saturday the government could still railroad the congress into accepting Mr. Hardjono, its preferred candidate, or bring the meeting to a standstill.

Escobar buried in chaotic funeral

MEDELLIN, Colombia (R) — Three thousand mourners from the slums of Medellin, waving Colombian flags and chanting "Pablo Pablo Pablo," buried cocaine king Pablo Escobar Friday, the day after the drug lord was killed by police in a shootout.

The crowd, mostly drawn from the working-class district which Mr. Escobar built and gave to the poor to win support, had earlier wrecked the funeral chapel where his simple grey metallic coffin lay in their desperation to catch a glimpse of the body.

"Colombia has lost God's envoy sent to end misery and poverty," wailed Escobar's sister Marina. "Colombia has lost the only man who could have made things better."

While the rest of Colombia celebrated the end of a bloody career of drug terror which has lasted nearly 10 years, Mr. Escobar's family and admirers gathered outside the Jardines Monte Sacro Cemetery in Medellin to bid their hero farewell.

Tired of waiting for hours outside the small room where Escobar lay in an open coffin, the crowd burst in, smashing down doors and windows to catch a glimpse of the fat, bearded trafficker's body, dressed in a striped T-shirt and sporting a moustache.

Old people fainted and children were almost crushed in the tumult as Mr. Escobar's cheering fans picked up the coffin and manhandled it into the cemetery's main funeral chapel where there was more space.

Soldiers and police carried the coffin out to the burial plot as hundreds of mourners threw

N. Korea to ease access to nuclear sites

WASHINGTON (R) — North Korea formally responded to U.S. proposals for resolving the dispute over its nuclear capability Friday and the New York Times said Pyongyang had offered international inspectors wider access to its nuclear sites.

The newspaper, citing Clinton administration sources, said the offer — which still fell short of U.S. demands — was made at a meeting Friday at the United Nations between North Korean envoys and U.S. State Department officials.

The newspaper said in its Saturday editions that North Korea had offered to allow inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) unlimited access to most of the nuclear sites it had already disclosed officially.

But U.S. officials said the offer failed to provide access to other sites that could help determine how much plutonium Pyongyang may have diverted to weapons programmes in the past. That would require further negotiation; the newspaper said.

President Bill Clinton said Friday he wanted to avoid a confrontation with North Korea and U.S. officials were encouraged that Pyongyang had at least made a formal response.

Mr. Clinton, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, told reporters that he intended to remain "very firm" with the North Koreans and at the same time "hold out the hand of possible cooperation."

The White House and State Department were officially mum on whether Pyongyang had satisfied international demands on its nuclear programme, saying only that they were studying the North Korean response and discussing it with U.S. allies.

But U.S. officials seemed cautiously optimistic. "The key thing that's different is that we've gotten a response now," one official said. "We're pleased that we got a response."

And a U.S. diplomat in New York said the language of the North Korean response was "markedly different" from North Korea's rhetoric over the last few days.

Mr. Clinton, talking to Denver television station KUSA and Phoenix station KPXX while in New Mexico, said his concern with North Korea's nuclear programme is that the North Koreans are "so much more isolated from the rest of us."

"They need to come on and join the rest of U.S. They need to reconcile with the South (Korea). And I want to help them. I don't want us to have a real confrontation here," he said.

"We're just going to be firm and keep the hand out at the same time, and hope it works."

Women win top press awards

WASHINGTON (AP) — For the first time in the 11-year history of the National Press Foundation, outstanding women journalists are receiving both the foundation's top broadcast and print awards. ABC Television interviewer Barbara Walters will receive the Award for Excellence in Broadcast Journalism and Des Moines Register editor Geneva Overholser will get the Editor of the Year Award. Arthur "Chip" Bok of the Akron Beacon Journal will receive the foundation's Editorial Cartoonist Award. Godfrey Sperling of the Christian Science Monitor will receive a special citation for bringing news makers and reporters together at his legendary "Sperling Breakfasts."

Philip Meyer, journalism professor at the University of North Carolina, and Elliot Jaspis, former journalism professor at the University of Missouri and now systems editor for Cox Newspapers in Washington, will receive awards for distinguished contributions to journalism. They are credited with leading the movement toward computer-assisted research that is aiding today's reporters. The awards will be presented at the foundation's 11th annual black-tie dinner on Feb. 23 in Washington.

Lack of success in German AIDS research attacked

HALLE, Germany (AFP) — German Health Minister Horst Seehofer criticised the country's lack of success in research into AIDS, in an interview published Saturday. Speaking to the daily Mitteldeutscher Express, Mr. Seehofer said researchers were hampered by restrictive laws, public mistrust of technological progress, and too much bureaucracy in universities. "The motivation of researchers is not good," he added. "The government subsidies were sufficient, but they can do nothing more than give them a boost." His comments came three weeks after he drew widespread criticism by calling for everyone in Germany who had undergone surgery or received blood products to be tested for AIDS. That call followed the revelation that contaminated blood products sold by a number of laboratories had infected a large number of people in Germany since the 1980s.

Man with 40 wives still wants to marry more

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A 78-year-old bedouin man in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has married more than 40 times, but is still looking for another wife. "I still want to have another wife if I find a suitable one," the man told the magazine Al-Shuruk. Born in the oasis town of Al Ain, Ali Ibn Ghadhi Ibn Mohammad Al Qitabi said he could no longer remember how many times he had married. "It could be 40 times or more. The number is too big to remember," he said. "I married from among four UAE tribes. The other wives include four from Egypt and the rest from India. Some stayed with me for years, some months and others day. I had children by only three of them," he said. The turbaned, bearded man did not keep more than four wives at a time, because of a prohibition by Islam. Explaining how he came to have so many wives, Ali said, "life was easy and marrying was easier." He added, "dowries did not exceed a camel, and those who did not have camels gave only 15 rupees." He said he loved his first wife most. "I will never find a wife like her, even if I marry 100 times."

Jackson to give statement in civil suit in January

LOS ANGELES (R) — Michael Jackson is making progress under treatment for drug addiction and will return to Los Angeles in time to make a sworn statement on Jan. 18 in a lawsuit filed by a boy accusing him of molesting him, his lawyer and family members said Friday. One of the pop star's brothers, Jermaine, said Jackson told him and his parents by phone that he was "feeling strong and much improved and looking forward to coming home." Jermaine Jackson said in a statement that the multimillionaire entertainer would make his first public appearance "since his recapture" for a television special for charity in Las Vegas on Feb. 5. The announcements — the first indication of Jackson's plans since he disappeared from sight last month — followed a plea by his mother, Katherine Jackson, to return home and defend himself.

Chinese swimmer breaks another world record

PALMA DE MALLORCA, Spain (R) — Dai Guohong of China set a world record for the women's 100 metres breaststroke at the world short-course swimming championships Saturday.

Her time of one minute 6.58 seconds beat the mark of 1:07.05 set by Silke Hoerner of East Germany in Bonn in February 1986.

Dai broke the 400 metres individual medley world short-course record Thursday and twice lowered the 200 metres breaststroke world mark Friday.

China broke the women's world 4x100 metres freestyle relay short-course record with a time of 3:35.97.

It beat the mark of 3:38.77 set by East Germany in Monaco in December 1987.

The Chinese women's 4x100 metres freestyle team was Lu Bin, Shan Ying, Jia Yuan and Le Jingyi.

Earlier Saturday Australia's Linley Frame upstaged Chinese ace Dai in heats at the world championships.

Frame, the world long-course champion, posted the fastest heat time of one minute 7.34 seconds in the women's 100 metres breaststroke.

Dai was just seven-hundredths of a second slower in winning her heat and both looked sure to threaten the 1:07.05 world short-course record.

The Chinese women have dominated these championships, winning six of their nine races in the first two days — five of them in world record time.

Liu Limin, winner of the women's 200 metres butterfly, established herself as favourite in the 100 butterfly by setting the fastest heat time of 1:00.12 but team mate Qu Yun was ninth overall and failed by a tiny fraction to qualify for the



Chinese swimmer Dai Guohong ploughs the water to set a new world record as she wins the 200m stroke heats event at the short track swimming championships in Palma De Mallorca, Spain (AFP photo)

final.

The Chinese also failed to make the final of the women's 400 metres freestyle, one of the distance freestyle events in which their swimmers in Palma have been outclassed.

Janet Evans, triple Olympic champion in 1988, posted the second-fastest qualifying time behind fellow American Trina Jackson as she aimed to add the 400 metres freestyle title to the 800 crown she won Friday.

American Jon Olsen, the Pan-Pacific champion, led men's 100 metres freestyle qualifiers ahead of Brazilian Fernando de Queiroz and Gustavo Borges, the world record holder.

American Eric Wunderlich set a brisk pace in the men's 200 metres breaststroke, winning his heat by more than a second from British Olympic medalist Nick Gillingham, the second-fastest qualifier overall.

Australia's Phil Rogers, world short-course record holder

and winner of Friday's 100 breaststroke, took the seventh qualifying slot.

Olympic bronze medalist Franck Esposito of France set the pace in men's 200 metres butterfly heats. American Mark Henderson, who took the silver in the 100 butterfly, failed to make the final.

Meanwhile Australian officials have complained about the testing procedure at the swimming championships.

Australian press officer Ian Hanson said Friday the team had sent a delegation to talk to the International Swimming Federation (FINA) Technical Commission because they felt the tests were not strict enough.

"We had our medical staff looking at the situation and we were getting feedback from our swimmers that they hadn't been tested properly," he said.

Some Australian swimmers had been told to leave the water for a test but then kept waiting for a long time, Han-

son said.

The Australians were also worried about a shortage of chaperones to supervise the screenings.

"There are only five chaperones for 24 tests. It's got to be chaperoned or what's to stop people swapping samples?" he said. "We are going to make sure the FINA rules are observed."

However, Britain's Karen Pickering, whose defiant challenge in the 200 metres freestyle won her the gold, was impressed by the level of testing.

"They've done a lot of testing here," she said. "I was watched all the time but I don't know about everyone else."

She said speculation about drug abuse was fresh in every competitor's mind.

"But it's quite easy to use it as an excuse," Pickering said. "If someone swims faster than you, you can say 'oh, they're on drugs'. It's an easy way out."

China dominates final day of Asian Athletics Championships

MANILA (AP) — China's Chen Zhaojing set a meet record Saturday in the women's 200 metre despite a leg injury and Hao Liu beat an injured Uzbek favourite in men's shotput in the final day of the Asian Athletics Championships.

China's domination at the biennial meet remained overpowering. With all but five events complete, the Chinese had won 37 of the 108 medals, including 22 of the 36 golds.

Chen's winning time of 23.24 seconds in the 200 metre beat the old mark of 23.34 set by P.T. Usha of India in New Delhi in 1989. Sri Lanka's Damayanthi Darsana won the silver in 23.29 and Wang Hui Chen of Taiwan took the bronze in 23.42.

"I was not 100 per cent confident of winning," Chen, who wore a silver necklace and earrings for luck, said. "I am satisfied with the results. The last moments were good considering the injury."

China also picked up golds in the women's triple jump and men's 300 metre race. Ren Ruiping clinched the gold in the women's triple with a leap of 14.05-metre (46'11").

Kim Hyu-in of South Korea won the silver with 12.69 metres and Naraishi Ismail of Malaysia took the bronze at 12.45 metres.

Huang Dang of China won the men's 200 metre race in 20.83 seconds, followed by Kuchi Konakapomi of Japan 20.98 and Zhao Cunlin of China in 21.07.

Ibrahim Ismail of Qatar, who won the men's 400 metres Friday, was expected to win the event and jumped off to an early lead. But he dropped out late in the race rubbing his leg in pain.

"I would have won very easily," Ismail said. "The race was over for me after 50 metres. I was really feeling good, then disaster struck."

Triple jumper Aleksei Fotianov gave the former Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan its first gold with a winning distance of 16.89 metres (55'7") in the men's event. Oleg Sakirkin of Kazakhstan won the silver at 16.82 (55'5") and Sergey Arzamasov to Kazakhstan took the bronze at 16.78 (55'5").

In the men's shot put Liu, already assured of a gold after his first heave of 18.56 metres (60'10"), threw the shot put to a

distance of 19.04 metres (62'5") on his sixth and last try, breaking a former meet record of 18.32 metres (60'1") set by China's Ma Yong Feng in Singapore in 1987.

Blal Saud of Qatar came in second with a throw of 18.28 metres (59'11"). Heavily favoured Sergey Kot of Uzbekistan suffered a leg injury while making his first throw, and had to settle for third with a distance of 17.85 metres (58'6").

Qatar, whose total population wouldn't even qualify as a modest-sized Asian city, is finishing among the medal leaders in Asian Athletics Championships dominated by China.

Qatar's oil-rich Arab sheikhdom, a sandy peninsula jutting into the Gulf from Eastern Saudi Arabia, has a population of about 500,000 compared with China's 1.1 billion.

Qatar, at 10,920 square kilometres (4,200 square miles), is smaller than Connecticut and Rhode Island combined. Most of Qatari territory is desert.

Despite such a limited talent pool, Qatar has managed to win two golds, two bronze and one silver medal during the five days of competition.

India, the world's second most populous country, has won six medals. Twenty-one of the 39 competitors haven't won any medals at all.

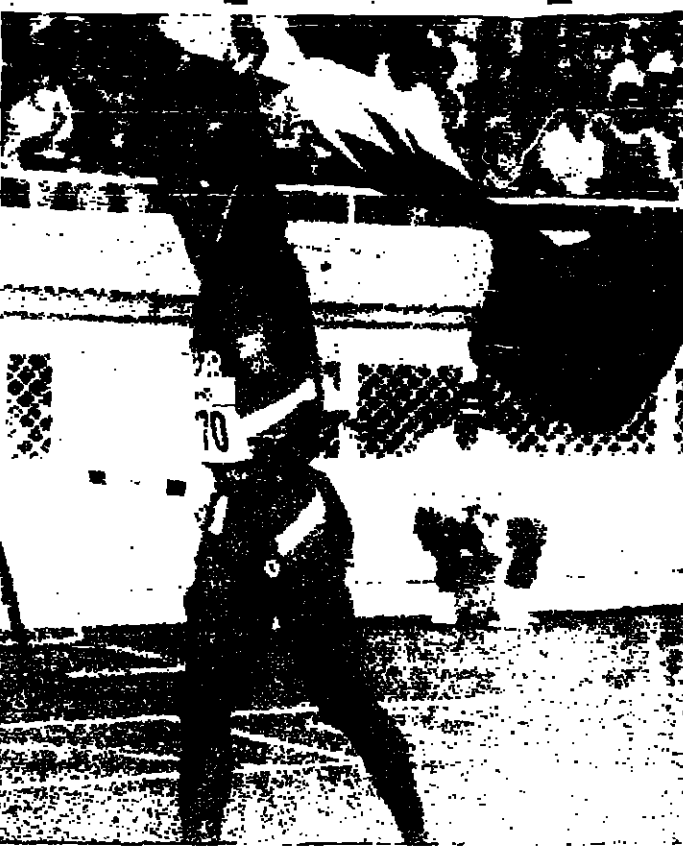
Money appears to be responsible for much of the Qatari success. The Qataris have brought along 13 coaches, one for each of the athletes on the team.

The coaches are themselves as "world class" as the athletes. Lee Evans, an American who won two gold medals in the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, coaches Ibrahim Ismail.

Evans said his main task now will be to prepare Ismail for the Asian Games next year in Hiroshima, Japan.

The Qataris have not said how much they spent on training their athletes. But Evans, who has coached in nearly 20 countries, said "no American university can pay me the money Qatar is paying me to coach."

Meanwhile, Syrian gold medalist Zebabu Hamed, who won the 400 metre hurdle in the Asian championships, was rubbed of \$200 at his hotel



Ibrahim Ismail carries the Qatari flag after winning the men's 400 metre event at the Asian Athletics Championships in Manila (AFP photo)

Saturday, police said.

Police said Hamed left the money on his table and left to make a telephone call while a roomboy was inside his room at the Sheraton Hotel. The money disappeared when he came back, police added.

Theft charges were filed against the roomboy, who denied the accusation.

On Wednesday, Hamed won the 400 hurdle in the championships.

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Asian medals table

MANILA — Final medal table at the Asian Athletics Championships here Saturday:

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
China	23	11	4	38
South Korea	3	4	3	10
Kazakhstan	3	3	3	9
Japan	2	5	7	14
India	2	2	5	9
Saudi Arabia	2	2	0	4
Qatar	2	1	2	5
Syria	2	0	0	2
Uzbekistan	1	5	1	6
Azerbaijan	1	0	0	1
Taiwan	0	2	4	6
Malaysia	0	2	3	5
Sri Lanka	0	2	1	3
Thailand	0	1	2	3
UAE	0	1	1	2
Iran	0	0	2	2
Kyrgyzstan	0	0	1	1
Philippines	0	0	1	1
Kuwait	0	0	1	1

Australia, Germany 1-1 in Davis Cup final

DUESSELDORF, Germany (Agencies) — Richard Fromberg saved five match points in a five-set thriller against Marc Goellner to help Australia level the Davis Cup final 1-1 after the opening two singles Friday.

Fromberg saved three match points in a third-set tie-break and another two in the fifth set as he clinched a 3-6, 5-7, 7-6 6-2, 9-7 victory after more than four and a half hours in the second rubber of the best-of-five final.

The partisan German crowd witnessed eight hours of tension in all after Michael Stich, the world number two, played the pressure points superbly as he battled back from one set behind to beat Jason Stoltenberg 6-7, 6-3, 6-1, 4-6, 6-3 to give the Germans a 1-0 lead.

The Dusseldorf crowd witnessed the first two five-set opening singles in a Davis Cup final since 1973 when Australia defeated the United States 5-0 in Cleveland, Ohio.

Goellner seemed to be on his way to a straight sets victory when he took the first two sets and had two match points at 4-1 in the third-set tiebreak. But Fromberg refused to yield,

saving the two points and another at 7-6.

The Australian, who has been suffering with a rib muscle injury in the last few days, took the next set with ease to force a fifth set.

Goellner, whose every winner was roared on by the home crowd, had another two chances when he was 40-15 ahead at 7-6 in the final set. But Fromberg saved the day again and broke back to lead 8-7 before taking advantage of his second match point in the next game to win the match.

It was the most dramatic Davis Cup final comeback since 1978 when Britain's Buster Mottram saved two match points in the third set against Brian Gottfried to come through to win the second rubber of the tie. The U.S. won 4-1.

Australian captain Neale Fraser said the match was one of the bravest performances of all time.

"That match has to be very, very high among the best. To be away from home in a big tie and save five match points when we lost the first rubber, I can't put it in words how good that was," Fraser said.

Fromberg was so tired he could not appear at a post-match news conference.

"He is flaked out on the table at the moment. It is sheer exhaustion," Fraser said.

Until the crucial stages of the final set of Stich's rubber against Stoltenberg, Germany's decision to play the tie on a slow court despite Stich's penchant for faster surfaces seemed to be a major mistake.

Despite the pressure of the partisan 10,000 crowd the bespectacled Stoltenberg, who expected to be a reserve here but won his late call-up after impressing Australian captain Neale Fraser during training, was not afraid to go for his shots.

Stoltenberg was 2-0 up in the final set before Stich battled back with two more breaks to win in just under three and a half hours.

"That was a lot of hard work today," Stich said. "Fortunately he got a bit nervous and made a few mistakes. After that I'm going for a hot bath, a nice dinner and a good sleep."

Stoltenberg said Stich's experience was vital at the end of the tight fifth set.

"I feel disappointed and frustrated that I did not take a chance to give Australia a 1-0 lead," he said. "But he came up with the big shots. He lifted his game at the end of the fifth. That is why he is the number two in the world and a great player."

Stich needs to recover quickly before he teams up with Patrick Kuehnen to play Wimbledon champions Mark Woodforde and Todd Woodbridge in Saturday's doubles.

The experienced Australian pair are favourites to take the rubber which would leave favourites Germany an immense task in Sunday's reverse singles.

Fromberg's heroics have put Australia right back in a match they seemed to be losing.

Goellner went into hiding Saturday.

He fled from the Trade Centre Stadium here late Friday refusing to speak to press and German officials.

He spent Saturday morning in his hotel, leaving team officials wondering whether he would turn up to watch the doubles rubber later in the day.

Goellner's defeat was the latest in a long chapter of disasters for the 23-year-old, 6ft 5in player.

He arrived in Dusseldorf having won only one match in five tournaments, and when questioned about his recent record, Goellner snapped arrogantly: "The ball is round. You will see what you will see Friday."

Goellner, nicknamed "baby boom-boom" (the new Boris Becker) when he emerged from relative obscurity wearing his cap back to front last spring, was hailed as a potential world-beater when he won the Nice Open in April.

But after his early successes he went off the boil and his behaviour became increasingly bizarre.

German team captain Niki Pietrangeli, unable to select Becker who had made himself unavailable for Davis Cup duty, slotted Goellner into his squad against the Czech and Slovak Republics team.

Egypt's Al Ahli looks to Super Club

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — After lifting the African Cup Winners' Cup a record fourth time Friday night, Egypt's Al Ahli have adjusted their sights to the Super Club.

The showdown between the African champions and cup winners will be staged in South Africa on Jan. 16, and could become an Egyptian affair.

Attempting to capture the Champions' Cup a record-equaling third time, Zamalek held Asante Kotoko goalless in Ghana, leaving them well placed to win the return game on Dec. 10.

If the Egyptians triumph, it will complete a remarkable hat-trick for the Cairo clubs as Zamalek were also champions in 1984 and 1986 when Al Ahli lifted the Cup-Winners' Cup.

Formed 87 years' ago, Al Ahli are the most successful club in continental competitions, winning the champions' cup twice and the Cup-Winners Cup four times.

They are one of only three clubs who have been champions and cup winners. The others, Canon Yaounde and Union Douala, came from Cameroon.

Pace beats off Seizinger's downhill challenge

TIGNES, France (R) — Canadian Kate Pace proved the unexpected world title she won last season was no fluke as she beat off the challenge of German Katja Seizinger to win the opening women's World Cup downhill of the season Saturday.

Taking advantage of perfect weather conditions and bright sunshine, the 24-year-old Pace raced the 2,200-metre Lognon course in one minute 16.56 seconds to beat Seizinger by 0.14 seconds.

Seizinger, winner of last season's World Cup downhill title and recognised as the skier to beat in the speed races, chose low start number 20 in the hope that the course would quicken.

But the German lost time in the technical part of the piste and had to concede defeat to Pace, who had started eighth.

Another German, Regina Haeusel, took third place in 1:16.77.

Pace was an unexpected world champion last season in Morioka, Japan, where she won the first major downhill of her career.

But she underlined that it was not a one-off by winning the final World Cup downhill of the season, a pre-Olympic test in Hafjell, Norway and her win in Tignes suggested she could be a serious contender to Seizinger's this winter.

"The course was in really good shape," the Canadian said.

"It was very smooth. But I was expecting harder snow and I had a problem on the big turn near the bottom. I didn't take it really clean."

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Witt falls in figure skating comeback

FRANKFURT, Germany (R) — German double Olympic figure skating champion Katarina Witt tripped and fell while skating her free programme in public for the first time Friday as part of her comeback.

Witt, unveiling the programme with which she wants to win gold at the Lillehammer Winter Olympics next February, tried a triple toe-loop in her first jump but slipped before a near-capacity crowd of more than 4,000 during Frankfurt's Gala On Ice.

No competition was involved in the event, but all eyes were on Witt to see if the figure-skating star of former East Germany has enough talent to return to competitive skating for unified Germany six years after she turned professional.

"There was something missing in her performance," said Elfriede Bayer, a German figure-skating judge who will be at the German Championships in Herne on Dec. 16-19.

"She must have been nervous skating her programme in public for the first time."

Witt will need a top-three placing in Herne to compete in the European Championships in Copenhagen next month and keep alive her Olympic hopes.

She won Olympic gold in 1986 before turning professional, but a new rule permitting pros to regain their competitive status tempted her to return in search of a third Olympic title, at Lillehammer.

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GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
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TALK IS NOT ALWAYS CHEAP

Both vulnerable. West deals.

NORTH
♠ A K Q 10
♥ 8 5 4
♦ A K
♣ Q J 8 3

WEST ♠ 9 8 2
♥ 9 5 3
♦ A K 9 6 2
♣ Q J

EAST ♠ 7 3
♥ 10 9 8 4 2
♦ 9 5 2
♣ A 7 6

SOUTH ♠ 7 4
♥ Q J 10
♦ 7 6 5 3
♣ A 7 6

The bidding:
West North East South
1 C 1 C 1 NT 1 NT
Pass 3 NT Pass Pass

Opening lead: Six of C
Bridge is a strange game. Sometimes an egregious error will go unpunished. On other occasions, perfectly normal actions can prove costly. This deal illustrates our point.

The auction is unremarkable. Give North the king of clubs instead of the queen-jack and nine tricks would be on top. As the cards lie, declarer had to work for the contract.

West led a fourth-best heart, won

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HEIFERS TENDER

The Jordanian Economic and Social Organisation for Retired Servicemen announces its decision to buy 450 dairy heifers Friesian or Holstein Friesian.

Those interested in bidding for this tender should contact the organisation at its premises in Al Mouqabalin/Amman to buy a copy of the tender for JD 200, non-refundable and by sealed envelope.

The deadline for opening tenders is 10 hrs, Saturday, 11/12/93.

Each tender should have enclosed a 10% cheque guarantee.

For more information, please contact tel. 792125-792151 - 792152
Head of Tenders Committee

PHILADELPHIA

Edie Murphy — in
BOOMERANG

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CONCORD

CONCORD '1'
Mel Gibson — in
FOREVER YOUNG

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CONCORD '2'
THE FUGITIVE

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

PLAZA

MADONNA
IN
BODY OF EVIDENCE

Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 5, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

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A popular political comedy
Actors: Abeer Issa, Daoud Jalalei,
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Every night at 8:15
Tickets are sold all day

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The theatre closes Saturday
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Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

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Mel Gibson — in
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Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30
CONCORD '2'
THE FUGITIVE
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

PLAZA

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The theatre closes Saturday
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English synopsis available

Security Council welcomes Iraqi accord, but little else

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — Security Council has welcomed Iraq's recent acceptance of an extensive long-term monitoring programme of its future weapons potential.

In a letter to Iraq the council, however, said it would continue to follow closely Iraq's cooperation with weapons inspectors "as they carry out plans for ongoing monitoring and verification over a sustained period."

The monitoring programme is a key step toward lifting the oil embargo against Iraq, which has been under stringent trade sanctions since it invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

Rolf Ekeus, head of the U.N. special Commission (UNSCOM) in charge of dismantling Iraq's war machine, said it would take about six months to implement the monitoring programme. UNSCOM first needs to survey more than 100 sites before beginning the programme, in February at the earliest.

U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright, who has maintained the toughest position among the 15 council members on any easing of sanctions, said the testing period should be "at least six to 12 months," diplomats reported.

The letter was crafted carefully after U.S. officials declined to compliment Iraq on anything. But other council members believed Baghdad's acceptance of the monitoring programme was more than an acknowledgment.

In the end Washington agreed on the simple text but U.S. officials, in talks with reporters, were careful to stress the words "sustained period."

Britain's ambassador, Sir David Hannay, told reporters the monitoring showed a "spirit of some cooperation" in the weapons area. But he said

"only the super-optimists in the council would deny that there would not be a need for a great deal more perseverance before we get to the end of the road."

Diplomats said earlier that Iraq had some informal discussions with the United Nations on resuming limited oil sales, which the council authorised to help pay for badly needed humanitarian supplies for the Iraqi people.

Iraq had earlier turned down a deal of a one-time sale of \$1.6 billion, which is separate from a total lifting of the oil embargo.

But the envoys and U.N. officials said no decision had been made to resume these talks and they did not expect one, if any, for several months. Mr. Ekeus said he did not think Iraq would resume talks because of heavy U.N. control on food distribution and other matters. "They don't like the idea at all," he said.

A 1991 Gulf war ceasefire resolution, written in the main by Washington, specifically ties sanctions on oil exports to fulfilling weapons demands. Other council requirements are linked to sanctions on imports of goods to Iraq.

Nevertheless, some Security Council diplomats, sympathetic to lifting the oil embargo, say Iraq would have to recognise its newly-demarcated boundary with Kuwait before Washington would even consider easing the oil embargo.

An advance team from the United Nations will travel to Iraq in January to prepare for long-term monitoring of Iraq's weapons programme, Mr. Ekeus said.

Mr. Ekeus said Baghdad's decision to agree to long-term monitoring removed the main obstacle to lifting the oil embargo.

The council "will follow closely Iraq's cooperation with the Special Commission and

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as they carry out the plans for ongoing monitoring and verification over a sustained period," the council letter said.

Mr. Ekeus said the U.N. monitoring could be deployed as early as February and that there would be a six-month probation period to test it. "The day the embargo is lifted, the system must be strong enough to continue and not collapse," he said.

The Iraqi agreement to long-term monitoring has caused a devaluation of the dollar against the U.S. dollar in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The exchange rate had been stable at around 40 dinars to the dollar for several months, but Baghdad's announcement one week ago that it agreed to the U.N. demand for long-term monitoring pushed the rate as high as 52 to the dollar, traders told an AFP correspondent.

The rate fluctuated between 46 and 50 dinars to the dollar during the week after the announcement.

In Dohuk near the Turkish border, cigarette merchants said they were unable to sell cigarettes, the prices of which are pegged to the dollar.

Normally traders smuggle cigarettes into Turkey and Syria, providing one of the most important sources of income in the Dohuk region.

Customs officials at Haj Omran on the Iranian border said Iran had closed its border to trade a week ago.

They said Iran was concerned that the Iraqi government might change the dinar currency completely following its agreement to long-term monitoring.

Truck drivers arriving from Iran told AFP their trucks carrying food had been stranded on the Iranian side of the border for the past five days.

Kuwait to claim \$117b from Iraq

KUWAIT (Agencies) — Kuwait will claim about \$117 billion in compensation through the United Nations for losses from Iraq's 1990-91 occupation, an official said on Saturday.

"The losses Kuwait can claim through the United Nations are preliminarily estimated at approximately 35 billion dinars (\$117 billion)," said an official of the public authority for assessment of compensations for damages resulting from Iraqi aggression.

Adel Assam, the general manager, said by telephone the \$117 billion of claims by the public and private sector and by individuals did not include oil revenue lost due to damage and destruction caused to oil installations.

Such additional economic losses would take total losses in Kuwait to about \$170 billion, he said.

The figures do not include losses suffered by Kuwait-based foreign or multinational institutions and expatriates.

Under Gulf war ceasefire terms Iraq must compensate all losses caused by its invasion and occupation.

Baghdad will be required to pay to a special U.N. compensation fund a third of oil revenues when it is eventually allowed to resume exports following the lifting of sanctions.

Even if Iraq paid all its oil revenues into the U.N. compensation fund it would take about a decade to repay Kuwait if producing at pre-invasion rates and selling at current depressed prices.

Mr. Assam said interest on the losses incurred during the seven months of Iraqi occupation from August 1990 to February 1991 was estimated at \$30 billion.

Kuwaiti assets, estimated at \$100 billion before the Iraqi invasion, were halved after the Iraqi troops were driven out by a U.S.-led coalition in February 1991, because of spending on reconstruction, mainly in the oil sector, which was seriously damaged during the Gulf war.

More than 80 per cent of Kuwait's revenue comes from oil exports.

Mr. Assam said that under U.N. rules the additional economic losses such as forfeited oil revenue could not be recovered through the U.N. fund set up by the world body.

He said Kuwait could try to recover the additional economic losses through the World Court in the Hague or perhaps through Iraqi courts at some stage in the future.

Mr. Assam said he expected final assessment of Kuwait's losses would be completed within a few weeks.

The Kuwaiti economy has also suffered in the past few years from bad management of foreign investments.

Kuwait lost up to \$5 billion in Spain.

Meanwhile, the head of the Kuwaiti committee for prisoners-of-war (PoWs) and missing said his country would even "join forces with the devil" to secure the release of Kuwaitis still held in Iraqi prisons.



'AMUSING ROLLER': An engineer drives his creation the "Amusing Roller II" during a demonstration in downtown Tokyo Saturday. The vehicle, which can drive sideways, took

first place in the 1993 Toyota Idea Olympics which is held to encourage engineers working at Toyota to put together their own ideas (AFP photo)

Arafat relents to Executive Committee pressure for changes

TUNIS (Agencies) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Executive Committee decided Saturday to end Chairman Yasser Arafat's monopoly in directing talks with Israel, PLO sources said.

Members trying to defuse a row over Mr. Arafat's leadership style agreed at a meeting in Tunis to set up a committee to oversee the talks, the sources said.

PLO officials say Mr. Arafat has been singlehandedly directing the dialogue with Israel in recent weeks, alienating senior colleagues in the PLO's executive body.

"The Executive Committee decided to set up a body which will be the reference for the talks with Israel," said a senior PLO official who asked not to be named.

Mr. Arafat called talks in Tunis Friday night after three top aides and key supporters of his peace deal with Israel were said to be "in a sulky mood" for weeks over the leadership issue.

The three include Mahmoud Abbas. He directed secret talks with Israel which led to the self-rule agreement he signed on behalf of the PLO in September. The others are information chief Yasser Abed Rabbo and Suleiman Najab, leader of the Palestinian People's Party.

In theory, Mr. Abbas is co-chairman with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres of the PLO-Israeli liaison committee

on the negotiations.

But the liaison committee met only once in October and was not convened when the Cairo talks with Israel on the implementation of the self-rule accord hit deadlock.

Mr. Arafat invited the three to attend the Executive Committee meeting, promising free debate on democratic reforms in the PLO, the PLO sources said.

During the sessions on Friday night and Saturday, the Executive Committee also took measures to prepare a constitutional charter and define the outlines of economic policy in occupied areas where Israel is due to hand over to the PLO on Dec. 13, PLO officials said.

It also started discussing names for the Palestinian National Authority which will be chaired by Mr. Arafat and is to take control after the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho under the peace accord.

The authority will be composed of personalities from the occupied territories and the diaspora, the official said.

The PLO Executive Committee meeting was attended by 11 of its 18 members. It has lost six of its original 18 members who resigned when secret negotiations with Israel emerged in August.

The meeting is to resume on Dec. 9 to allow Mr. Arafat to go to Jordan for a meeting

Monday with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and visit Germany next week, PLO sources said.

Mr. Arafat, meanwhile, appointed two top supporters to lead his mainstream Fateh group in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and reorganise its ranks before Israel starts a withdrawal from the occupied territories.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Faisal Husseini was appointed Fateh leader for the West Bank, and another negotiator, Zakaria Agha, was named Fateh chief in Gaza, PLO sources said.

The appointments were made during a meeting late Friday of Fateh's 18-member ruling Central Committee.

Mr. Husseini and Mr. Agha have been loyal PLO supporters and peace advocates for many years. Mr. Husseini was instrumental in helping former U.S. Secretary of State James Baker get the Middle East peace process off the ground.

But this was the first time that either activist was officially named to a post in Fateh or any of the seven other factions under the PLO umbrella.

Hanan Ashrawi, the peace negotiator who will head the Palestinian's diplomatic office in Washington, called the appointments "a victory for moderation."

The appointment of Mr. Husseini and Mr. Agha apparently was aimed at silencing critics within Fateh

Somali talks on brink of collapse

ADDIS ABABA (Agency) — Somali peace talks were on the brink of collapse Saturday, a key Somali official said, amid a dispute over proposals by Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi, who is hosting the negotiations.

Aweys Haji Yousef, advisor to interim President Ali Mahdi Muhammad, said Mr. Zenawi told a meeting of 12 factions opposed to warlord Mohammed Farah Aideed that the talks were over because of their rejection of his proposals.

"The doors to inter-Somali negotiations are closed, goodbye," Mr. Haji Yousef quoted Mr. Zenawi as saying at the end of the meeting early Saturday.

Mr. Ali Mahdi's group leads the 12 anti-Aideed factions.

Mr. Haji Yousef said Mr. Zenawi had made three "unacceptable" proposals to the factions, who have been gathered here since the start of the week to seek a solution to Somalia's civil war.

These were: that they support the release of pro-Aideed Somalia National Alliance (SNA) prisoners held by the United Nations in Mogadishu; that they reconsider the

makeup of regional and district councils set up under U.N. guidance across Somalia; and that they agreed in principle to a new conference of national reconciliation.

The 12 factions rejected the proposals, insisting that for the moment only "informal negotiations" should be held, on the basis of agreements reached in Addis Ababa last March.

"If the Ethiopian president does not change his mind, it is over and we will undoubtedly leave tomorrow," said Mr. Haji Yousef, who accused the Ethiopian government of being "biased" in favour of Gen. Aideed.

General Aideed arrived several days after the start of the talks, having initially boycotted them.

Gen. Aideed said on his arrival here Thursday — following strong persuasion by the Ethiopian government — that he had "no problem" with his "brother" (Ali Mahdi) and that he would set no conditions for a meeting with him.

The Ethiopian government said Thursday that the talks should last two or three days, ending before President Zenawi's departure for Egypt

Monday.

The government also said the talks should lead to a reconciliation conference in Ethiopia or Somalia lasting several months, from January.

SNA officials told reporters Gen. Aideed was ready to meet Mr. Mahdi without any preconditions.

"He is in his hotel room. He is ready to meet Ali Mahdi as soon as he (Ali Mahdi) changes his mind. That is why we came here," said Abdul Karim Ahmad, Gen. Aideed's deputy.

But political commentators said the chances of a meeting between the two men were diminishing.

Mr. Ali Mahdi told reporters on Friday he would rather return to Somalia without meeting Gen. Aideed than meet him before he accepted the conditions he had set.

"We have made our position very clear to president Meles Zenawi. Aideed must accept and commit himself to these conditions before we can meet him," he said.

Ethiopia would like to arrange a settlement based on a preliminary peace agreement signed in Addis Ababa.

Wisner defends Israeli 'deterrent'

CAIRO (AFP) — Israel's monopoly on nuclear weapons in the Middle East is justified because of continuing threats from Iraq and Iran, a senior U.S. official said here.

U.S. Under-Secretary of Defence Frank Wisner, who ended a visit to Egypt Saturday, said Iraq "still has designs on the development of weapons of mass destruction," while Iran's case was "a bit different, but no less alarming."

"The threat that Israel faces in my judgement is not in the immediate neighbourhood... we have to remember that

weapons of mass destruction now can be launched from long distances and carried by missiles," Mr. Wisner said.

The U.S. official held talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo Saturday, as part of a tour to reassure the United States' friends about U.S. defence commitments in the Middle East.

Mr. Wisner, formerly U.S. ambassador to Egypt, said the Iranian government was "developing weapons of mass destruction," and would "over time be a substantial threat to the rest of the region and to the American interests."

A Western diplomat in Cairo said Mr. Wisner was implicitly attributing to Israel a role as a nuclear "deterrent" against countries threatening the interests of the United States and its Arab allies in the region.

Mr. Wisner said U.S. military aid to Israel, Egypt and the Gulf countries would be maintained.

He is due to travel on to Gulf Arab countries.

U.S. troops have been stationed in the Gulf since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

Success of peace hinges on 'proper' implementation of self-rule

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The success of the Middle East peace process depends on the proper implementation of the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) accord, there is no Islamic threat to the peace process and regional security is possible only with political breakthrough leading to normalised relations among the countries of the region; this is the net analysis of three American scholars and political scientists currently visiting Jordan.

The three, Richard Hermann, Richard Cottam and Shibly Telhami, are specialists in their respective fields which are interwoven in the Middle East peace process.

According to Dr. Hermann, who is presenting a briefing on "U.S. Middle East policy and the peace process" at the American Centre library today, there is no commitment on the part of the U.S. administration on the shape of a Palestinian entity to emerge from the peace process.

But then, he said, the peace process is open-ended and it is up to the Palestinians and Israelis to determine the shape of a Palestinian entity in negotiations slated to start in the third year of autonomy

as envisaged in the Sept. 13 Israel-PLO agreement.

"Don't think that the U.S. will have anything against any solution that emerges from a consensus of the regional parties involved in the peace process," Dr. Hermann told the Jordan Times.

At the same time, the Palestinians have to make a success of their legislative elections, scheduled to be held in July 1994 under the autonomy accord, to help create a positive atmosphere for the achievement of their aspirations, he said.

Dr. Hermann believes that Washington, in the short term, will provide enough assistance, direct and indirect, to ensure that the Palestinian economy is developed and becomes a contributing factor to the success of the peace process.

One of the basic elements, in his belief, is that Washington is aware that if the peace process fails, that will be the end of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and the government of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin as well as a severe blow to U.S. "prestige," which, he says, Washington put on the line by throwing its weight behind the autonomy accord.

Jordan has to play a central role in ensuring the success of the accord, but it is doubtful that the Kingdom stands to receive any substantial amount of direct American assistance, Dr. Hermann said, pointing out that the focus of the Americans in the post-cold war era is towards addressing economic problems at home.

Dr. Cottam is an expert on Iran whose briefing in today's round-table discussion at the American Centre is entitled "The Islamic challenge to the peace process."

"The title of the briefing is 'misleading,' said Dr. Cottam, who does not believe that Iran or any other Muslim country poses any threat to the peace process.

According to Dr. Cottam, Washington is not "adequately addressing" signals from Iranian President Ali Hashemi Rafsanjani that Tehran is willing to interact with the peace process.

"The American focus on Iran is one of hostility," as a "terrorist" state which threatens U.S. strategic interests in the Middle East, Dr. Cottam said.

"I don't believe Iran is in a position to threaten American interests or undermine the peace process," he said, adding that the U.S. was not in a position to control or

dominate Iran even under the hypothetical premise that it threatens the U.S.

Dr. Cottam's explanation to the support that Iran is extending to the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, an avowed opponent of the peace process, is more in line with Tehran's belief that Iran is the only Muslim country which provides proper leadership and guidance to Islamic movements all over the world.

Dr. Cottam is an advocate of a total reconsidering of the present American thinking towards Iran with a view of integrating the country into mainstream international politics rather than the containment and isolation policy followed by Washington vis-a-vis the Gulf giant.

Dr. Cottam believes that a strategic relationship is unlikely between the Islamists and mostly secular, nationalist Palestinians since the differences between the two sides are too vast.

At the same time, the possibility remains that nationalists could get disenchanted with the peace process if they find their aspirations slowly being eroded.

Asked how he viewed prospects of direct American intervention to bridge the gap between Israel and the PLO as a means to counter the

influence of the rejectionist camp, Dr. Cottam said he, did not believe that Washington had a blueprint ready for such an intervention.

Dr. Telhami, the third scholar who presents a briefing on "The Israel-Palestine agreement: Its implications for regional security," believes that the "proper" implementation of the Sept. 13 Israel-PLO accord and efficient use of funds to develop the Palestinian economy is the key to the success of the peace process.

If these two objectives are served well, then opposition to the peace accord will gradually fade away, making way to pragmatic thinking among the opponents of a negotiated peace with Israel.

Dr. Telhami described as unfortunate a comment by Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres over the weekend that the peace accord would be off if Hamas won the expected July elections to a Palestinian self-rule governing body (Hamas has repeatedly said, however, that it has no plans to participate in the elections and vowed to do everything in its power to wreck the autonomy accord).

Dr. Telhami said both sides have an obligation to live up to the letter and spirit of the Sept. 13 accord and, as such, comments such as those

Mr. Peres made will have a negative effect on the process.

In the context of his specialisation in regional security, Dr. Telhami said he believed that concerns over the security on both sides of the Arab-Israeli divide could be alleviated to a large extent once Israel actually returns part of the land to the Palestinians under the autonomy accord.

Israel has to prove to the Arabs that it does not "covet" land and is not expansionist, as feared by the Arabs, and once this concept takes hold then the atmosphere for peace will be considerably improved, he said.

"Political breakthroughs" are the key to regional security and these two issues go hand in hand, he said.

Asked how he viewed Jordan's call for a conference on Middle East security along the lines of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), Dr. Telhami and Dr. Hermann said such a concept was welcome as long as it would set the groundwork for arms control agreements to go hand in hand with political agreements.

Without political agreements leading to bilateral interaction among Israel and the Arab countries a CSCE-

style meeting will fall much short of serving its intended purpose, they said.

Dr. Hermann noted that all countries in Europe, (except Albania) and the U.S. and Canada took part in the CSCE meetings after close political interaction among all countries involved — something that is lacking in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Furthermore, he noted, countries like Iran and Iraq, and others involved in the peace process, like Syria and Lebanon, are not taking part in the multilateral talks on Middle East arms control as part of the peace process.

"Regional security cannot be based on simple arms control agreements," he said, pointing out that such accords need close monitoring mechanisms which could not materialise except under bilateral political agreements.

At the same time, political negotiations and arms control discussions could complement each other in the sense that progress made on one track could encourage the parties involved to make progress on the other.

The round-table discussions attended by the three scholars began at the American Centre library under the auspices of the U.S. Information Agency at 5 p.m. today.

COLUMN 800000

Japan empress remains speechless

TOKYO (R) — More than six weeks after collapsing on her 59th birthday, Japan's Empress Michiko is still unable to speak, a palace spokesman said Saturday. "There is no change in her condition. She still can't speak," the spokesman said. Nevertheless, he added, the empress did not plan a medical examination. About two weeks after her collapse, the empress resumed duties that do not require her to speak. Palace doctors believe Empress Michiko, speechless since Oct. 20, is suffering from an illness caused by "deep sorrow."

Tests on her brain detected no irregularities in her nervous system, according to palace statements released shortly after the mysterious malady struck. Her symptoms at first prompted speculation she had suffered a minor stroke but the palace reports suggested deep depression, partly caused by magazine articles which criticised her. Empress Michiko, although widely popular with the public, is said to be disliked by certain ultra-conservative courtiers for her attempts to modernise and open up the closed imperial family. Weekly magazines ran articles in the weeks leading up to her collapse attacking Empress Michiko as a "dictator" determined to wrest control of palace management. A Bungei Shunju weekly magazine, Shukan Bunshun, ran two articles in September portraying her as bossy and dictatorial in the palace. One alleged she had demanded that a forest loved by her husband's father, the late Emperor Hirohito, be cut down. Another said that both Emperor Akihito and empress Michiko disliked the uniforms of the Self Defence Forces — Japan's armed forces — and wanted them to wear plain clothes to imperial functions. The magazine published an apology last month, admitting some of the expressions lacked precision and caused misunderstanding.

Castro plays down sports stars' defections

HAVANA (AFP) — President Castro played down the defection of over 40 Cuban athletes at the recent Central American and Caribbean Games in Puerto Rico during a welcome home reception for the rest of the team. "Despite the fact some (athletes) were disloyal, it was offset by the fact that the majority had the dignity to be loyal to the motherland," said Mr. Castro at the reception. Altogether 42 athletes defected during the games which finished last Tuesday. Many of them were helped by Cuban exiles. In a bid to stop further defections Cuban officials shipped most of their remaining athletes and officials back home even before the closing ceremonies. The only athletes left behind to march in the parade were the champion baseball team who remained defection free. Conrado Martinez, president of Cuba's Sports Federation, also played down the defections during the reception, saying only 10 per cent of the 800-strong team had requested political asylum. Mr. Martinez added that Cuban sport would benefit from the defections. "Now we feel better. They (the defectors) have helped us purify Cuban sport," said Mr. Martinez. He claimed that all sorts of inducements had been made to the athletes by anti-Castro groups to try to get more of them to defect but Castro boasted that all the gold in the world could not buy Cuban athletes.

Serious crime down in U.S.

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Reported cases of murder, rape and other serious crimes fell by five per cent in the United States in the first six months of 1993 compared to the same period last year, the government said. The numbers follow a general decline in serious crimes nationwide; serious crime was down three per cent in 1992 from 1991, according to figures reported by police departments to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Still, FBI Director Louis Freeh said there was too much crime in this country. "The small reported crime may be positive, but most Americans want more comfort from them because the levels of violent crime and drug trafficking remain so staggering," he said in a statement.

Handwritten text in Arabic script: "الله أكبر"